

Imaginary Heroes in the Age of Science: Archetypes in Popular Culture

By Michael Griffin

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ARCHETYPES IN POPULAR CULTURE

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PROLOGUE

This book is a layman's and student's introduction to archetypal analysis of popular culture. It has a particular focus - the hero - and a particular context: three areas of pop culture with which I am familiar. There is also some original thinking scattered amongst the exposition, which is summarized in the conclusion. One way of looking at these new ideas is to consider them part of literary criticism, besides pop culture studies or depth psychology. Now, literary criticism is as old as literature itself, and it has a long list of distinguished names and competing schools of thought. It just so happens that my ideas can be classified as a form of "archetypal criticism", so named by Northrop Frye.

Any work of archetypal criticism must contend with the issues put forth by Frye in 1957, in his book Anatomy of Criticism. A supreme scholar and critic, Frye had some clear warnings against dogmatism. They bear quotation.

Frye had his own analytical schemes for criticism, but he retained open-mindedness. He defended the principle of polysemous, or manifold, meaning: "The modern student of critical theory is faced with a body of rhetoricians who speak of texture and frontal assaults, with students of history who deal with traditions and sources, with critics using material from psychology and anthropology, with Aristotelians, Coleridgians, Thomists, Freudians, Jungians, Marxists, with students of myths, rituals, archetypes, metaphors, ambiguities, and significant

forms. The student must either admit the principle of polysemous meaning, or choose one of these groups and then try to prove that all the others are less legitimate. The former is the way of scholarship, and leads to the advancement of learning; the latter is the way of pedantry, and gives us a wide choice of goals, the most conspicuous today being fantastical learning, or myth criticism, contentious learning, or historical criticism, and delicate learning, or "new" criticism. Once we have admitted the new principle of polysemous meaning, we can either stop with a purely relative and pluralistic position, or we can go on to consider the possibility that there is a finite number of valid critical methods, and that they can all be contained in a single theory." Frye did his best to make a single theory.

My goal has not been to contribute to critical theory, but I have created a set of "fallacies" which function as critical tools. That is, they are hard questions to ask of any entertainment. It's sort of a way of taking an objective, clear-the-decks view. These "fallacies" are not intended as ultimate principles or dogma. They are mere questions, some of which lead to interesting resolutions.

As I said at the beginning, this is a study of popular culture. A quality of open-mindedness should show through the criticism. The following is offered in a spirit of scholarship, rather than pedantry.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTORY IDEAS

"The universal hero myth, for example, always refers to a powerful man or god-man who vanguishes evil ... and who liberates his people from destruction and death."

Carl Jung, Man and His Symbols

Tales of imaginary heroes have a universal and timeless appeal. We can consider modern versions of these tales as mere escapist fun, or we can look at how they meet our needs in the scientific age. For the Hero uses the tools of any age, any culture. What is the source of the Hero's appeal, and how does modern science fit in with that?

Why do people turn to heroic entertainment in our modern times? What is it about a character's use of science and technology that could be satisfying to an audience? Answers to these questions may touch the boundaries of the most profound mysteries of humanity. We can delve into Jungian archetypes and Joseph Campbell's mythology while examining our own contemporary popular culture.

Myths and archetypes may have obvious connections to heroic fiction as is found in movies, comics and science fiction, but it's amazing how few of those connections are explicated in print. This paucity is evident whether popular, academic, or professional literature is perused. True, Jungian journals do cover the movies, and science fiction journals do analyze myths. There are even periodicals about comic books which frequently identify the

archetypes the superheroes model. There is nevertheless scant coverage of these topics in the literature, with the occasional appearance of a deep analysis. So here's my contribution, a general introduction with occasional sources cited.

The main thrust of the book will follow a personal course of interest, and the tone will vary from a primer to analytical. Personal experiences and opinions will mix with basic presentations of others' ideas or analyses of my own. One could read into this sequence of text a kind of personal journey through selected pop media in a quest for meaning. The invisible position of the pure scholar is thus frequently lacking, yet my intent is serious beyond mere self-involvement. I would hope to interest the general public, scholars, and other writers.

As for my credentials: I'm in my late thirties and I have two college degrees: a Bachelor of Arts in mathematics and a Master of Library Science. For employment, I index and write abstracts of articles in academic journals, for a database publisher. Some of these journals cover philosophy, psychology, history, politics, literature, theatre, film, TV, or science. I get paid to read a lot. I've read comic books since before I could read words. Once I could read words I started on science fiction. I've given up both comics and scifi at various times in my life, only to return to them and rebuild my lost collections. I've read lots of other things in my personal life, and I'm one of those baby boomers who was profoundly influenced by Bill Moyers' 1988 TV series on Joseph Campbell. I was trying to write screenplays at the time,

and while I knew a lot about Carl Jung I didn't know anything about Campbell. I have since learned a lot more about Carl Jung, and Joseph Campbell, too. And then came Robert Bly and Iron John, in another program of Bill Moyers' on public TV in 1990. Campbell taught us about the quest to find the father, while Bly added to the message that if you don't find the father then devils will take his place (there's a lesson in that about the spread of juvenile delinquency). The learning just never stops, and there's something to be said for that Socratic position that the more one learns the more one realizes what one didn't know and still doesn't know.

In writing a book, one must avoid the dangers of not having much of anything to say or any learning to impart. In science fiction, it's what's known as "Sturgeon's Law" for literature: 90% of everything is garbage. That law also applies outside sci-fi to all forms of writing and entertainment. I'll keep it in mind as I try not to waste words or get boring.

This first chapter will lay the groundwork for the others. The ideas herein will be referred to and applied to the various popular cultures of science fiction, comics, film, and TV.

ENTERTAINMENT SUBCULTURES

I hold that subcultures in society can be identified by the type of entertainment that they consume. To some this may seem obvious, to others it may seem inadequate. I intend to flesh out this notion so that it becomes one of the central ideas for the rest of the book.

Social scientists usually define a culture by many categories, ranging from material subsistence to religious beliefs. There are as many different approaches to this as there are divisions in each branch of these sciences. One could take an approach from sociology, anthropology, or social psychology. Those in the humanities may define cultures by their mythologies, or how they explain the world and human relations.

Most mythologies have a "culture hero", which explains the origin of their material culture and technology. The most common culture hero is one who steals fire from the gods and brings it back to the people. In our western world, we are most familiar with this myth in the form of Prometheus, the ancient Greek hero. The imaginary hero in the age of science is a new form of Prometheus. Likewise, the ancients had Hero cults to structure their beliefs around culture heroes. A modern form of this is what I call entertainment subcultures. For myths encompasses the first forms of human entertainment, if one looks at those arts which serve myth and ritual. Arts such as story telling, music, dance, costume, painting. Participation in a mythology means participating in a ritual, which means participating in an activity which is highly entertaining. Some of these rituals may have audiences, too.

Our modern society has entertainments which can include both audiences and some form of audience participation. For example, one can see youths dancing at rock concerts, dressed in the appropriate attire to shock their parents and indicate that they are rebels who do not hold responsible positions in society. The

attire also signals belonging to a community of like minds, and the fashion trends have social meaning sometimes. I recall the fading hippy days of my youth and how important things like long hair were to me then, signs of freedom and all that.

But as I grew up and became disenchanted with the rebellion of youth, cynicism set in. So much of the romantic appeal of youthful rebellion is the belief that the world will be changed. It became obvious to me that such rebellion was frivolous, more a fashion in clothes and music than any coherent reorganization of the world. In short, there was no fundamental challenge to the pillars of reality: scientific technology and the economic system.

The philosophers of science and the economists may argue all they want in their academic journals (and I often write abstracts of it), but in the overall picture science and economics present single systems to the peoples of the world. You buy your things with money from one currency system, and you use your things confident that a theoretical breakthrough in the sciences or technology will not make them stop running. This leads to quite a distinction from all other areas of human endeavor. It makes these two pursuits fundamental to all of the others.

In practical terms, there may be many different value systems and lifestyle subcultures, but there is only one science and one economics. And every social grouping makes use of scientific technology and the money system in common with every other, though the products consumed may differ. In fact, how science and money are acknowledged in each grouping may differ widely, from total

ignorance to total worship.

I am accordingly focussing on those social groupings which recognize science and integrate it into their world view. I am not looking at the economics pillar of civilization. In fact, science and economics are closely intertwined, and there are popular histories which detail the mutual progress of both. James Burke comes to mind as an author and PBS TV series host. And of course, scholars research this topic extensively. It is beyond my range, while entertainment is not.

So what is an entertainment subculture, and how could it embrace science? These subcultures can be identified by their self-contained world views and entertainers and heroes and fans. For example, country music aficionados may be quite separate from people whose main pastime is watching 1940s Hollywood movies. I am looking at the dominant form of entertainment, and any amount of eclectic consumerism is irrelevant.

Essential to any form of entertainment, except perhaps the folk arts, is a star system of either living performers or other heroes. Yes, performers are a kind of hero. I remember the rapt attention I used to pay to rock stars' fingers as they played their guitars, and how it inspired me to learn to play. The performer is a master of a rare talent and tools of the trade. They bring a boon to society, even if it is only a pleasing diversion. Part of the definition of a hero, covered in Joseph Campbell's section at greater length, is the achievement of a benefit to society.

The heroes could be long dead or they could be mythical.

Again, I usually restrict my inquiry to the fictional heroes, those creatures of the imagination who aspire to the status of myth. Not all heroes are mythic sources. Most probably enact mythic sources, as good performers may do, but they are not identified as the original representative of a myth in the way that the ancient Greeks saw Prometheus was the fire bringer to mankind.

So I am looking at imaginary heroes, and how they use science or technology to the benefit of their societies, and how those heroes form part of the core of the entertainment of social groups. Those social groups are defined by their restricted attention to these heroes and entertainments, and as such form subcultures within our age of science. These entertainments are forms of what is called popular culture, such as movies or TV shows or books or magazines or comic books.

Again, these forms of popular culture are merely the examples I have chosen out of familiarity, and the issue of eclectic consumerism across boundaries is irrelevant. For example, I have been an eclectic consumer enough to write this book, but I have gone through phases when one area in particular was more interesting to me than the others, and the heroes of that field held sway over the others.

For these subcultures are loose groupings, wherein the living participants may exclude all other reality or dabble as little as they like. This does not negate the fact that essentially complete social systems are present, which use grounding world views as in any primitive society. Yes, I indulge in a trace of

anthropologists' cultural relativism here: modern mankind has social functions identical to any prehistoric or primitive group, just dressed up in new clothes.

And the focus is on examples used by modern mankind. But first, now that I have defined the social limits of my study, I need to explore the mental dynamics of these entertainment subcultures. After all, I am dealing with imaginary heroes, or creatures of the mind and their appeal to the minds of modern people. The remainder of this chapter will delve into the details.

RELEVANT IDEAS OF CARL JUNG

How to begin to write about Carl Jung and his ideas? The man has become something of a cult figure among Jungians, yet at the same time some of his ideas can best be described as the unofficial gospel of the entertainment industry. Once you start looking for it, the mention of archetypes and Jung seems everywhere in movies and TV shows. No matter the genre, from the waitress in 'Cheers' who reads Jung, to the counselor in 'Star Trek, the Next Generation' who quotes Jung to a fellow space traveller, Jung has certainly been adopted by Hollywood.

At least, the effective ideas from Jung have been taken. The man had a complex life, with many interests and beliefs; and his own share of personality flaws and ignorant prejudices from his times. Jungians seem to miss all of this. Perhaps they have to because they are always waging a perennial battle to achieve respectable status for Jung among the scientific community. The

standard biography of Jung goes that in his later years he got too much into mysticism and thus alienated scientific psychologists.

Amazingly, those criticisms could also be said about a science fiction figurehead, John W. Campbell, Jr. Like Jung, Campbell became something of a personality cult figure for an entertainment subculture, dealt with in the next chapter. There are no idols without feet of clay in this book, and so I will place the intellectual heroes in their human context. This is also part of the process of growing up, when one learns that one's role models are not perfect, but still contain qualities to emulate. Or one learns that one's intellectual influences contain good ideas even if they're wrong about other things. In Jung's case, the bad ideas are very extraneous to his main ideas, and easily ignored.

Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961) was a sort of real scientific hero, Sigmund Freud's chosen protege, but Jung rebelled and developed his own ideas. As for Freud's ideas, what did Freud achieve of immortal truth? The first scientific study of unconscious thought processes, and extension of this analysis to symbolism indicated by dreams and other thoughts. For example, people could project their denied desires onto others. He elaborated this with the Id, Ego, and Superego, or unconscious desires, conscious mind, and partly unconscious morality. The main drive of the unconscious Id he identified as sexual desire. No matter how many of the details of Freud's psychology may be proven wrong by psychologists, even if all of it, the basic ideas of his psychoanalysis do place Freud in that small pantheon of great

thinkers whose names should live forever.

While Freud is the famous founder of psychoanalysis, Jung and Alfred Adler are the other two names who comprise the essential trinity of the field. Adler broke from Freud's sexual theories and developed a theory of motivation based upon the concept of personal power. This is in line with common usage of the word, denoting personal competence and mastery of one's environment. In fact, the standard dismissal of science fiction and comic books as compensatory power fantasies is an Adlerian concept. It translates into a critique of escapism which can have validity in addition to other viewpoints. Adler, Jung, and Freud proposed differing systems of motivation which can be considered complementary, even if these creators took stronger stands against each other.

Freud will always overshadow Jung, but Jungians consider that more of Jung's ideas will withstand the test of time than Freud's. Jung added a new layer of unconscious mind to the Freudian model: the collective unconscious. He said that this unconscious mind had instinctive patterns of social meaning and behavior, called archetypes. These could be categorized as generic characters, with each person's access to and expression of the characters fitting that person's unique individuality yet still possessing the general features which could be compared to anyone else's.

An excellent introduction to Jungian psychology comes from Jung and others in Man and his Symbols. A fascinating exploration of many archetypes and their possible biological basis can be found in Anthony Stevens' book Archetypes: A Natural History of the Self. I will rely upon these two books for most of what follows.

Archetype is a word with broad meaning and application. It comes from the Greek roots *archos*, meaning first, and *typos*, meaning a figure or model. Plato wrote of archetypes as universal, unchanging ideas. Literary theory uses archetypes in a similar manner to Jung. There are lists and descriptions of character types as basic models, or archetypal characters. However, Jung was referring to instinctual drives, mankind's equivalent of birds flying south for the winter. He did not mean that we literally had multiple characters running around inside our subconscious minds, but that we had multiple forces and psychic needs there.

The closer these forces get to the surface of conscious thought, the more they can be interpreted as if they were literary characters. In fact, in times of stress, they can manifest in a person's imagination as actual characters. A common example cited is shipwrecked sailors who have visions of sea maidens who lead them to safety. Shakespeare tuned into this manifestation in one of his greatest plays, The Tempest. The most common manifestation is perhaps the romantic ideal, for example the woman of a man's dreams. A classic literary expression of this is H. Rider Haggard's novel She. Fictional entertainment and Jungian archetypes have common intersections, going back to the earliest such entertainments: the myths told around the hearth fire, or perhaps around the cave fire.

It would serve to list some of the most common archetypes Jung dealt with. These include the Mother, the Father, the Family, the Child, the Feminine, the Masculine, the God, the Hero, the Shadow, the Trickster, Initiation, and various particular types within these basic forms.

For example, the expression of the feminine in the male is called the Anima. This is another word with a distinguished history and wide use. It is the Latin word for the soul. A typical Jungian use of the anima is the romantic idea of the woman of your dreams, often in a cautionary mode for men not to commit to someone who only superficially resembles an unconscious drive.

Obversely, the expression of the masculine in the female is called the Animus. Again, a Latin word for the soul, and a more common usage in modern times, to mean either intention or animosity. One can sometimes hear the phrase "He's gotten my animus" or "He's generating animus." Recently, DC Comics has taken these expressions literally with some new superheroes, but that awaits in a later chapter.

Jung proposed four stages of development for the Masculine and Feminine archetypes, to match the social needs of men and women as they grow up. The first stage is the primitive woman or physical man, typified by Tarzan of the Apes. The second stage is the man of action or romantic man, or the romantic beauty typified by Helen of Troy. The third stage is the woman of spiritual feeling, or the man who bears the word. The fourth stage is the spiritually wise old man or the woman of transcendent wisdom, typified by the Mona Lisa.

Now, if a man or woman is acting out the forms specific to their sex, then they are accessing their Feminine or Masculine archetypes. Or perhaps the archetypes are accessing them. If the sexually opposite archetype is to be addressed, it is contained

within as the anima in the man or the animus in the woman. These forces still have to be dealt with, to have their drives satisfied. Common expressions of this notion can be found in phrases such as "Men incorporating their femininity" or "Women making use of their masculine power." To do this means to achieve awareness of one's abilities and to develop one's talents or insights or compassion. The anima or animus can be a force for insight, and it is a voice or urge to be listened to.

This is a subtle psychological concept which can be crudely seized upon or approximated in practice. For example, modern adolescence can be a time of gender experimentation, with possible forays into sexual or other deviations from social norms such as cross dressing. These may be trendy topics in modern entertainment aimed at teenagers and other youth. As such, they constitute physically acting out concepts and drives which are rather addressed to social roles and needs for personal knowledge. The entertainment is thus shallow, and the people who participate in the actions are thus unconscious of their true motives, or at least ignorant of how to gain real insight. The experience gained thereby may not lead to anything useful in life. So goes the decadence of youth.

The Shadow is a very fundamental archetype, most widely known by the pulp character of the same name who first appeared in 1931, inspired by a radio character from the late 1920s. Who knows what evil lurks in the hearts of men? The Shadow knows! Those words were followed by a hideous laughter. That program was originally

broadcast on the radio from 1937 to 1954, followed by perpetual rebroadcast in later decades. Jung actually coined the name Shadow due to the common manifestation of the archetype as a character in dreams.

The Shadow is the dark side of the ego's force, to use Star Wars terminology. More precisely, it is the repressed aspects of a person's abilities or powers which exist in shadow, striving to come out into the light. The frustrations of these drives can lead to dream characters, having the same sex as the dreamer, who may literally be dark in appearance. The Shadow can be made conscious; it is generally not a force forever unconscious, such as the ravaging Freudian Id. But it can be composed of negative attributes of one's personality, thus leading to their repression into the shadow realm, away from awareness and self condemnation. Or it can be composed of good attributes. A negative Shadow can undergo the Freudian process of projection, in which it is ascribed to another person while the owner denies having it. Jung saw part of the German motivation of World War Two as a nationwide Shadow projection, as in antisemitism or Hitler's accusing the Allies of aggression.

The Trickster is another archetype of wide application. DC Comics actually has a supervillain named Trickster, but no doubt the most widely known trickster in pop culture is Batman's archenemy (arch as in primary, as in literary theory), The Joker. There are several other classic tricksters in pop culture and mythology. The Marx Brothers and Charlie Chaplin are movie

tricksters. Coyote can be an American Indian trickster. Superman has Mr. Mxyzptlk or Mr. Mxyztpk (note the spelling difference).

The Trickster as an archetype generally represents an immature stage in personality development. There is no commitment to the community, no responsibility, only tricks. The Trickster is pursuing gratification of basic appetites or urges, even if that urge is only to get a laugh at another's expense. Comedians are often Tricksters, as the movie examples mentioned above show, or as illustrated in American Indian myths. Coyote often pulls pranks, and the Winnebago Indians have a Trickster cycle of stories which represents the first stage in a Hero cycle of four levels. This irresponsibility corresponds to the position of youth in society, and it partakes of the social dynamics of adolescent rebellion and cynicism. I am not claiming that juvenile delinquency is programmed into humanity by instinctual archetypes. There does seem to be an access to this archetype as youths reach a natural progression in social development and critical thinking. This will be covered in a later section of this chapter.

The Trickster does not have to represent immaturity. The quality of the tricks can be to teach profound lessons, as the mythic Coyote may do. Trickster could be a herald to unconscious resources, or the culture hero who steals fire for man. In his TV series The Power of Myth, Joseph Campbell tells Trickster tales of different cultures, which result in teaching lessons to the victims of the tricks. The Trickster could be in any culture and in any guise: samurai, bodhisattva, super animal like Coyote, or a god

disguised as a lowly servant.

What is the relevance of such archetypes as the Shadow, Anima, Animus, and Trickster to heroic tales involving the use of science and technology? Any of these archetypes could be providing the drive to make a type of Hero. There are masculine heroes, feminine heroes, trickster heroes, etc. Or the Hero could be following a basic pattern. These are the timeless sources, the founts from which heroes spring. It is now time to look at that specific character, the Hero. The scholar who took these Jungian ideas and applied them to the imaginary heroes of all the cultures of the world is the next topic.

RELEVANT IDEAS OF JOSEPH CAMPBELL

Joseph Campbell (1904-1981) is probably more widely known in American culture than Carl Jung's school of analytic psychology, thanks to the wonder of public TV. The Power of Myth burst like a bombshell on the public scene in 1988, educating millions of hungry minds to the mental buttons that were being pushed by fictional stories of heroes. I was one of them, and I was not alone. Rumor had it that "study groups" formed in the San Francisco Bay Area, for people to delve into his mythology.

Campbell also provided a modern, cosmopolitan philosophy of life and humanity. Bill Moyers interviewed him for hours, and he came off like an enlightened bodhisattva, tolerant of all of the religions of the world, proclaiming that all were true if you understand the fundamental psychological truths they expressed, and

the fundamentally unexplainable ultimate mystery of life that myth was a metaphor of. He even had the sincere humility to disclaim any knowledge of the meaning of life. He said people want an experience of life, not a meaning, and myth gave access to that experience.

Campbell almost never mentioned Jung in these interviews, and he certainly did have other scholarly sources than Jung for his ideas. Nonetheless, Campbell was a sufficiently supreme authority on Jung that he served as editor for the 1971 book by The Viking Press, The Portable Jung, and was an editor and member of the Bollingen Foundation, Jungian publishers. Scholars may split hairs on how much of a Jungian Campbell was. Robert Segal's book, Joseph Campbell: An Introduction, in the chapter 'Campbell as a Jungian', claims significant differences and ultimately concludes in the next chapter that he was really a romantic.

Romantic or not, he essentially believed in archetypes and their expression as myths. Actually, Campbell acknowledged the work of many psychoanalysts who pioneered the study of myth, including Freud and Otto Rank, but his essential focus was on archetypes. There is no more thorough explication of the Hero archetype than Joseph Campbell's, but it occurs on the level of mythical stories.

Now we come closer to the imaginary hero of science, up from the depths of the unconscious and into the land of myth. For Campbell was not a Jungian explorer of the depths of the unconscious, seeking out archetypes like odd fish at the bottom of



the ocean of mind. Campbell was a scholar of mythology, the foremost expert in the world on comparative mythology. His greatest work is an ultimate classic for all time, the 1949 book The Hero with a Thousand Faces. In it, he presented a model for the hero's adventure, its social and psychological meaning, and examples from all over the world.

Campbell saw the basic model of the hero's adventure as an elaboration of the social rites of passage which primitive societies engage in for their youth. The rites have three stages: separation, initiation, and return. The purpose of these rites is to bring young men or women into adulthood. They are separated from their community to emphasize the importance of the changes they are going through. They are then given an intense experience as the final change, i.e. the initiation, now that they are old enough. For girls, they may already be experiencing the initiation as their first menstruation. They are then returned to the community, with new status as young adults, imposing new responsibilities upon them but also new freedoms. They are free to choose a mate, perhaps, but they must contribute to the economy - whether domestic, agricultural, or hunting.

Campbell's hero pattern accordingly has a separation, initiation, and return. The separation is some call to adventure that the hero receives. Perhaps a spirit challenges him. The hero may at first refuse the call, but forces conspire to draw him into it. The separation is finally achieved by the crossing of a first threshold into a different land, the land of the adventure. This

may be a magical realm, such as the underworld where spirits of the dead dwell.

The initiation is the adventure itself. The hero will undergo many trials and meet many strange characters. The adventure has a specific goal to be achieved, and Campbell identified four main categories in mythology.⁽¹⁾ These could be a sacred marriage, apotheosis, atonement with the father, or theft of a magic elixir. An example of the sacred marriage is the prince who slays the dragon to win the hand of the fair princess. An example of the sacred elixir is the Greek god Prometheus stealing fire to bring back to mortal men.

Prometheus' example illustrates the return stage of the adventure. He stole fire to bring it somewhere else, to which he had to return. Thus, adventurous perils may be overcome in the return to the land of the mortals, or normal society. There may be a final struggle at the threshold. Once the hero has succeeded in recrossing the threshold, he brings his elixir or boon back to society, and thereby changes the world. He may improve things, he may simply restore things to their state before some evil befell the land. Another common return motif is rebirth after the hero is killed in some way. There are many variations on the basic model that Campbell created.

This is the most common pattern that stories fit, not just "adventure" stories. Look for a story with a main character who could be called a hero and you will see this pattern at work, no matter how transformed the details. Let us remain in the land of

myth and fairy tale for the moment.

It seems apt to bring in Robert Bly's analysis of the fairy tale of Iron John at this point. The story is a variation on the hero's adventure, and Iron John is a magical character who serves as a helper to a boy, or a mentor. Bly focused on the mentor function of older men to guide young men into adulthood. Bly has some telling criticisms of standard hero stories. He notes that most of them end with the hero's return to society, and too often this hero is a loner who has no way to fit in. As Bly said when referring to the American western version of the hero's tale, once the adventure is over and the town saved, the hero shakes the lady's hand, kisses his horse, and rides off into the sunset. That is not any boon which enables the hero to fit into society.(2)

In his book *Iron John*, Bly also noted the consequences of youth who do not find a mentor, or achieve what Campbell referred to as the atonement with the father. The space in the psyche of the young man who needs a male role model will fill up with demons and devils. That is, bad role models will arise from within or appear from without. Referring to archetypes, the Trickster could remain in force, to create what social scientists may call an arrested adolescent, or a juvenile delinquent. But behind every juvenile delinquent is a delinquent father, for that is what's missing from the youth's life: adult guidance.

Bly's emphasis on mentors is a natural complement to Campbell's analysis of the social functions of myth. Campbell pointed out that initiation rituals enact the myth in the person of

the youth being granted adulthood. There can be a symbolic death as a child and a rebirth as an adult, the first version of being "born again". The mentors are the adults who guide the youth through the initiation into adulthood. Why do societies have mythic rituals to initiate youth into adulthood? Why do they have myths as stories in addition to their participatory function? Campbell saw a biological origin of the need for myth, what he vaguely referred to as the conflict of the bodily organs. He noted the biological power of a ritual to warp the mind of the participant, breaking down mental defenses. This is the way to finish off any spirit of youthful rebellion and inculcate adult virtues and allegiance. The fact that these rituals succeed and produce contributing members of society is proof of their psychological validity. That is, it is proof of the persuasive power of archetypal characters.

OTHER IDEAS OF YOUTH PSYCHOLOGY

To claim belief in Jungian psychology is not to deny the relevance of other schools. A man who began as a Freudian and developed his own humanistic school, Erik Erikson, has many relevant ideas although he did not address heroes directly. Another Jungian, Anthony Stevens, recognizes the influence of Freudian forces in addition to archetypes, and uses Erikson as a minor source in his book on archetypes. Both men have relevant ideas on the psychodynamics of youth.

Erikson directly considered the question of youth adopting the

current technology of their society, and saw this as one of the central issues for youth to face in the transition to adulthood. He described the world view of a society, or its "system of ideals", as an ideology, but that is his own psychological meaning for a word commonly ascribed to politics. He went on, "We can ascribe to ideology the function of offering to youth ... introduction into the ethos of the prevailing technology and thus into sanctioned and regulated competition."

Erikson intensely dealt with youth and the identity crisis in the transition to adulthood. In his book Identity: Youth and Crisis, he divided personality development into eight stages, with a transitional crisis to be overcome to progress on to the next stage.(3) Stage one begins with infants and the development of trust in another. The succeeding stages are: autonomy vs. shame and doubt, initiative vs. guilt, industry vs. inferiority, identity vs. identity confusion, intimacy vs. isolation, generativity vs. stagnation, and integrity vs. despair.

The crisis of "ideological commitment" occurs in the fifth stage of identity versus identity confusion. This is the time of stormy adolescence, when values must be coalesced to proceed further into adult society. Failure to make this transition results in what Erikson called identity confusion, what is commonly called arrested adolescence, or failing to grow up. One result of this failure Erikson saw as juvenile delinquency, when youth were desperately looking for someone to follow and finding only criminals willing to lead them.

In regards to science and technology, it may be noted that delinquents are not noted for becoming scientists or engineers, but there are the exceptions. For example, there are the computer hackers who eventually get caught and hired by the big companies once they are old enough. A delinquent subculture may embrace the prevailing technology more than the mainstream. So may the entertainment heroes they consume or worship.

Erikson's ideas have become part of the common coin of youth psychology. More common coin comes from the ideas on moral development of youth, initiated by Jean Piaget's ideas on conceptual thinking and carried forward by Lawrence Kohlberg. A typical scenario of stages in youthful morality sees childish morality as black and white absolute categories. Adolescence brings with it a realization that most of life is grey choices instead, and thus the temptation of evil and antisocial behavior is part of the storms of youth. A successful transition to adulthood results in self-regulating moral behavior. This common tripartite division of childish absolute, tempted youth, and stable adult bears an interesting correspondence to Campbell's heroic pattern. Therein is the call out of childish security, adventures in the land of evil temptation, and the return to society.

Anthony Stevens' analysis of archetypes and the process of social initiation shows that the connection between myth and moral growth is no accident. In his book Archetypes: A Natural History of the Self, Stevens put it perfectly: "He who is uninitiated is lost." And how is one initiated? In primitive times, one was

initiated by acting out a ritual of myth. The imaginary heroes of the myths became the spirits which possessed the youth in their conditions of extremity, when they were undergoing their initiation rituals. As mentioned above, Campbell pointed out that rituals wear down the mind, and leave it open to suggestion. The suggestions come from the adults of society, on how to join society. As Robert Bly pointed out, the adults know when it is time to initiate the youth, in the case of boys, when they become too antisocial in their behavior. Stevens devotes a chapter to this, pointing out that the archetypal forces of initiation must overcome association with the immature Trickster hero.

In common coin, what is one who is a trickster? A juvenile delinquent, someone who is stuck in an attitude of cynicism and sees no good reason to be good under one's own regulation. The temptations of evil conduct are given in to, and social responsibility is not accepted. In archetypal terms, what is going on? Stevens calls it a frustration of archetypal intent. In mythological terms, Bly calls it the devils filling in the gaps in the minds of youth. The devil finds work for the idle archetypes of youth.

Something is needed to shock the young and blow their minds into adulthood. Thus, mythic ritual: initiation into the ideals of the society, ideals which include attitudes towards technology and social competition.

So how do these archetypal forces translate into social initiation via mythic rituals in modern entertainment subcultures?



The problem is, they usually don't. This is what I'd call the entertainment fallacy: that real performers or fictional characters are a guide to real living. In terms of mythology, entertainers are false heroes if they do not provide a benefit to society. Typically, that benefit would be either as a positive role model to emulate in real life, i.e. mentors as Robert Bly describes, or as a guide for passing into adult life, such as teachers.

Those entertainers who merely bring society the boon of a pleasing diversion may just be entertainers and not objects of hero worship. They may serve as role models for one to learn a hobby and so develop one's creativity. But there are many entertainers, such as athletes and actors and musicians, who are objects of hero worship. This hero worship starts in youth, but remains arrested in adulthood. Too many adults worship entertainers and athletes just as much as kids. How many adults in our society really could say "It's just a movie!" and mean it?

Nor is this necessarily a problem restricted to modern entertainment subcultures. Worship of athletes and other entertainers goes back at least to ancient Greece, and many of the characters in myth are nothing but athletes, e.g. muscle men like Hercules or sword slingers like Beowulf. Where did they draw the line in ancient times and say "It's only a play!"

Cultures can get too caught up in entertainment, as we hear from the historians' cries of "bread and circuses" which contributed to the downfall of Rome, or modern claims that we all watch too much TV (a Star Trek show in the 1960s, critical of TV,



had the title of Bread and Circuses). Being too caught up in entertainment means being in a ritual without end, never making it to the dramatic resolution of the initiation into society. In short, the entire society could be in a state of arrested adolescence.

This is an extension of what anthropologists mark as one of the defining qualities of mankind, namely the long childhood and delay of adulthood. This allowed us to develop complex brains and achieve dominance over nature, by the creation of technology and science among other things. In this sense, entertainment subcultures are a natural development, a cultural refinement on the biology of human evolution. But when the entertainment becomes shallow diversion instead of a Prometheus to emulate, not enough firewood may get gathered and trouble may result.

Or far worse things can happen. The wheels of archetypal frustration spin and produce juvenile delinquency, and adult delinquency, and various social problems such as violent crime. Which brings us to another relevant area of consideration.

ON VIOLENCE IN THE MEDIA

What can be said about violence in the mass media that hasn't possibly been said already? The topic has occupied congressional hearings and warnings to TV networks, concerned parent organizations, churches, psychologists. The media persists, the violence persists. The 1992 riots in Los Angeles after the Rodney King verdict seemed like a fulfillment of Nathaniel West's Day of

the Locust, in which a jaded mob of movie fans sparks the apocalypse.

I have no apology to make for violence, and no justification for it to make on grounds of Jungian psychology. But I do have some entertainment interpretations to make, and I need to preface that with more general remarks. Let us begin with abstractions and get to Joseph Campbell apace.

First, what do we mean by violence? Violence could be so vaguely defined that every action in existence is violent: atoms banging into each other, microbes eating each other, roots splitting soil, wind blowing things, the law of the jungle with eat or be eaten. Joseph Campbell referred to the innately violent nature of hunting societies and how it's natural for that to find expression in their myths. Their lives were drenched in blood, he told Bill Moyers. And thus Campbell was done with the topic of violence in entertainment. He went on to the problems of violence in the world as problems of people who do not have stable myths to believe in, with young people acting as barbarians, or the religious-ethnic-political violence in Beirut. This touches on the problems we define as violence: namely people choosing to commit a violent act against other people. This form of violence we consider bad, even if it's a necessary evil such as self defense or acts of war. The fools who cheer war but don't have to be real soldiers of course are examples of psychological forces at work, but maybe there is some appeal of violence to all of us.

There are many possible appeals, actually: power fantasies -

a psychological effect, the vicarious thrill of violence in entertainment - a physical effect, conflict as a center of attention - a dramatic effect. And what do heroes do? Typically, they engage in violence against easily identified enemies, even monsters in the original myths. Archetypal characters - heroes - fight with archetypal forces - villains - in violent conflicts. Why does this entertain us in such a satisfying way? For the hero's violence is the mold for the form of the entertainment violence, not the reverse. Just any person in any story will not satisfy as much as a hero's struggles.

Let us go back to the abstract vagueness of violence: anything bumping into anything could be called violent. And perhaps this is a clue as to what is going on with violence in heroic myths or any entertainment involving archetypes. The violence could be an expression of the interaction of the archetypal patterns. Just as those patterns filter up through the mind as characters, so their interactions filter upwards as violence. The violence is not "programmed into" us just as specific characters are not programmed into us, but when people interpret basic archetypal forces in terms of their social environment, the clashing and running together of those forces is as violent as a picture of atoms would be.

And likewise, when people set out to consciously create stories, drawing upon the archetypal forces, violence emerges as a likely activity for those characters. And likewise, when people in an audience imagine archetypal characters engaging in violence with other archetypal characters, what happens? There would be a

correspondence to the interactions of the archetypes in the minds of the audience. This leads to the conclusion that violence can provide access to human archetypes.

Perhaps this is not so disturbing or new an idea as it could be. We think of violent madmen as people who have regressed into the behavior of cave men or lower animals. Crazy twisted minds may engage in perverse violence to act out their deeper drives. We think of satanic cults performing violent sacrifices, or primitive tribes with violent rituals. We now approach the rituals of youthful transition, with possible violence and certain exhaustion of the youth to open their minds to basic forces and attach those forces to the tribe. These are all cases of violence accessing archetypes.

But why? The answer is the reverse of the process and the question: the archetypes express themselves as violence. It's a two way street, a closed circuit. This is not to deny that bad things may go on when the archetypes are expressed or accessed. Maybe we don't want to access them in just that way at just that time, maybe it would always be wrong, maybe there are less violent ways to accomplish the same story or experience.

Maybe so, but heroic entertainment, the subject of this book, involves action which appeals to a dramatic sense of something getting accomplished. If people in reality mimic a hero's violence to accomplish something in society, it is almost inevitably a bad thing, and this brings up a new question.

We could call the heroic fallacy a corollary of the

entertainment fallacy. The heroic fallacy is best stated as a question: how can stories about heroes who use violence to solve their problems help people get on with life in the real world? This is, in fact, the universal criticism of violence in the media which you can hear any parents' group cite. It's not just limited to parents, for professional writers may share it.

This question was perfectly expressed by the science fiction writer Lewis Shiner in remarks to a conference of literature professors.⁽⁴⁾ His speech was titled 'Betrayed' and by that he referred to cheap entertainment. He said, "How many of us actually engage in physical combat on a daily basis? How often is any of us shot at? How long has the first flush of romantic love/lust lasted for any of us? ... What's missing is a correspondence between fiction and the real world." These remarks were made at a conference on 'The Future of American Fiction'. From a man who is a star author of cyberpunk science fiction, and also writes for comic books on occasion. And who also pointed out to the professors that their academic novels were equally out of touch with the public's reality.

How do societies cope with the heroic fallacy? In tribal societies they coped with it perfectly, by giving full access to the violent myths in ritual initiation, settling down the youth, and maybe engaging in heroic violence in the reality of hunting. In modern societies, we are supposed to transform those archetypal forces into more symbolic interpretations, acting heroically in ways that do not require violence. Here the mass of humanity often

fails, as they fail to interpret religious insights symbolically, instead creating dogmas to kill over.

We are accordingly brought up to the common complaint that modern society has people who are still in the bodies and brains of hunting and gathering cave men, and we haven't perfectly adapted to modernity yet.

But are those who access the archetypes in harmless if not beneficial ways better adapted than most? Say, people who read of heroic adventures utilizing science and technology, say in comic books or science fiction literature or TV shows or movies? Could such people be less likely as a group to be criminal or violent or antisocial? Would such traits be specifically due to their successful access of archetypes in socially constructive ways, as their entertainment subculture directed? Could any precise, statistical social science research ever prove this? There are probably too many unknowable variables and disputed research paradigms, like Jungian psychology, to ever address this question in a clinical way. And that's not the book I'm writing, anyway.

As to an answer to the heroic fallacy, or the entertainment fallacy, or the dramatic video fallacy to come in a later chapter, I only present examples from popular culture to suggest possible affirmative answers of optimism. There are no perfect generalizations from this. Doubtless lots of people who have read science fiction have also committed murder. Probably most haven't. Maybe scifi contributed to a sense of mind that managed to avoid murder when there was a strong temptation to do so. Regardless, we

couldn't quantify that, even to study it. But we can look at case studies of the heroes in particular subcultures and how they present models in this scientific age. This often bears upon how youth are adapted to the mainstream world, in how they look at science and technology. But I will restrict myself to the thrills and the fun.

The topic of violence will come up again in the course of this book. There are so many ways to look at it. For TV and movies, there is much more of a question of incitement versus catharsis. For comics, there is the question of escapism. For scifi, there is some relation to the issue of reification. But the introductory idea here is the relation of violence to the archetypes involved in the heroic entertainment form. The heroic fallacy stands as a looming question over all of the entertainment subcultures, and indeed over all of life.

A peaceful world? The rule of law and order? Harmonious world competition unsullied by war or terrorism? Less street crime? I'm sorry, I don't have an answer to these questions. Carl Jung and Joseph Campbell and Robert Bly and Erik Erikson and Anthony Stevens do, in part. Fictional entertainment does, most of the time. Heroes always do. That's their job. They act, often in violent ways to solve problems. As times change, as the scientists and engineers change the world, the heroes can get more complicated jobs. They may have to use technology to solve problems, or at least struggle in a technological environment.

So let's begin our first batch of examples with a medium which

confronts science without flinch.

CHAPTER TWO: SCIENCE FICTION LITERATURE

"Science is, as a result, so inhuman, so utterly unsuited to mankind, that no human being can be a scientist; he can only set apart a certain section of his mind to think like a scientist."

John W. Campbell, Jr., Modern Science Fiction: Its Meaning and Its Future

Some scholars would call this chapter title an oxymoron: science fiction is not literature, even if it's in printed form. There are opposing camps on this issue, and they seem to be permanent fixtures, with neither side diminishing over time. Certainly, science fiction has acquired respectability on the college campus in the past twenty years, with many courses taught and many degrees given for science fiction scholarship. Nonetheless, there is a permanent attitude towards scifi which condemns most of it by literary standards, and that attitude is justified as far as the literary standards go.

What are those standards? That literature deals with the character development and inner life of the protagonist, that the central character in the story should examine himself or herself, and grow as a person, develop new insight and wisdom to fit the new experiences which have been acquired in the course of the story. Clearly, most science fiction does not deal with this. Clearly, a fair amount does and receives the proper acclaim by scifi critics

and reviewers.

Some science fiction authors are known as "literary" writers. For example, Ursula LeGuin and Philip K. Dick have such reputations, two rising stars of my youth in the 1960s and 1970s. Their reputations are well deserved, but this only highlights the actual division among the scifi community between those with "literary" attitudes and the mere storytellers.

A recent example of the acceptance of this division occurred at the 1994 World Science Fiction Convention in San Francisco. At a panel discussion on Philip K. Dick, one audience member played the role of the skeptic and asked the panel what was the big deal about Dick, since he was not impressed. One of the panel members politely told him to read Dick's books as literature instead of science fiction, to enhance his enjoyment. No one in the audience spoke out in rebellion. Rather, they were all silent: the silence of the guilty.

THE LITERATE VERSUS THE UNREAD

I would propose a different distinction than literature versus a genre like science fiction. The more obvious division in society consists of the aliterate, those who do not read even though they were taught to, and the readers. People in the publishing industry are keenly aware of this. What makes something a best seller? Maybe it sells a million copies. With well over 100 million adults in this country, that makes less than one percent of the adult public common readers of an item which claims some kind of

intellectual status, even if only as a masterpiece in a nonliterary genre. With a multiplication factor for circulating copies in libraries and used bookstores, maybe a few more percentage points are added, but the obvious minority of "people of the book" remains rather low.

The reasons for this are commonly explained. You know, the dumb masses versus the thinkers. The hierarchy of natural abilities, with the smarter at a smaller place in the pyramid. Thus, the natural resentment of those with "ordinary understanding" against the "gifted." And the flip side of that is intellectual snobbery, with those who have an edge thinking that that makes them better than the rest. It's important to distinguish that mere reading does not necessarily make one a critical thinker. Certainly Sturgeon's Law applies to nonfiction as well as fiction, and so much of what passes for debate in the mass media is mere tripe to persuade the dummies. Also, there are some fine thinkers who have reading impairments such as dyslexia. Or blindness, for that matter. Nonetheless, a division can be made between the readers and the aliterate, with a mass resentment against readers since that marks them as a cut above the average for mental tastes if not abilities.

That resentment can take fatal turns through history. Consider the original "people of the book": the Jews. In a popular paperback of 1971, The Jewish Mystique, a Jewish psychoanalyst named Ernest van den Haag made some interesting observations about his people. Historically, the smartest members

became rabbis and had a duty to have the most children. This led to, if not a genetic edge for smartness, then certainly a social culture favoring education.

Thus, after Haag, we can understand antisemitism: in its popular form, another form of anti-intellectualism. This came out in the open in the McCarthy witch hunt trials of the 1950s, when the House Committee on Unamerican Activities called the radical scholar William Mandel to testify in San Francisco. These particular hearings targeted authors, and Mandel had written a classic reference book on the Soviet Union. Surprising his listeners who were expecting references to communism, Mandel said in his opening statement, "Yes, I am a Jew." McCarthy was on the defensive through the rest of Mandel's hearing.

A Jewish science fiction writer and popularizer of science, Isaac Asimov, once made an interesting distinction between mass aliterate culture and the readers. In a 1990 interview, he said "If they made a movie out of one of my books and the only people who went to see it are the ones who read the book, it would be the most colossal flop in Hollywood history." Asimov had no illusions about the percentage of the population who were readers, or intelligent or even rational for that matter. He also did not wallow in bitterness or cynicism about it. In fact, he was one of the greatest popularizers of rationality and educators of those in the masses who were (and are) smart enough to pick up any of his books to read. He was the epitome of what popular culture does at its best.

For the best function of popular culture is to function as a bridge between the two cultures of the aliterate and the smarties who habitually read. The "two cultures" is a concept popularized by the English writer Charles P. Snow, with a 1959 book bearing that title, The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution. He made a distinction between scientific intellectuals and literary intellectuals. Lester del Rey (q.v.) cites science fiction as a link between these two cultures. Everybody's into those either/or aristotelian logical distinctions, it seems: scientific versus literary, literary versus genre, readers versus aliterate. Psychologists say it's the way we naturally think.

My two cultures are thus the literate and nonliterate, with popular media, or pop culture, as the intellectual link between the two. It does this with "popular" writing such as magazines and newspapers and "mass market" books. Or it does it with "educational" television shows or "documentary" movies. The goal is education in an entertaining way, in the comfort of your own home and out of the classroom.

THE ATOMIC SUBCULTURE: ANALOG MAGAZINE

And sometimes, a part of popular culture can actually stay on the side of the readers, or occupy that twilight netherworld between mass appeal and restriction to intelligence. A case in point is the magazine Analog, which carries the subtitle Science Fiction/Science Fact. Here is the popular, digest-sized monthly magazine, begun in 1930, which you can find on some drugstore

racks, and which is also the primary literary medium for an entertainment subculture consisting of scientists and technicians.

This is why Analog has lasted when so many other scifi mags have fallen by the wayside. Growing up in the 1960s and 1970s, I could find six different scifi monthly digests at a drugstore to buy. Analog was one of them, and the other survivors in 1994 are the original English-language scifi mag, Amazing Stories, founded in 1926, and The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction, which started in 1949. It was rather traumatic to me to see my world crumbling, with the deaths of Fantastic, Galaxy, and If. But a new digest started in 1977, Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine, which is going as strong as Analog.

Strangely enough, after being gone for about sixteen years, Galaxy has been revived in 1994 although it's no longer a digest. It joins a host of large-sized "slick" scifi magazines, some of which have been around for many years. Still, there's something lacking in the appeal of a slick magazine to one who is into the culture of reading. In prior decades, the reverse was the case: slick magazines had a higher status as a forum of better writing. Perhaps with the success of picture magazines the reversal has occurred.

Analog, or Astounding as it used to be named, had its own reputation for literary quality, in that it brought traditional storytelling skills to tales of scientists and technology. The intelligentsia appreciated it. In the early 1950s, editor John W. Campbell, Jr. took a survey of his readers, and 3,000 of a

circulation of 150,000 responded. Presuming there was some valid representation in the response, the survey revealed that the technical elite of America formed the main audience of the magazine. The average age of the readers was almost thirty, with most ranging from twenty to thirty five. Most were men with scientific or technical training and related employment. There were also younger college students and some older professionals.

Campbell assumed that his readership was double his circulation, thus 300,000. Based on the population of the country then, that worked out to only 0.2 percent of the nation. But given the limited population of scientists and technicians in America at the time, he figured that one third of America's technical personnel read his magazine! That is a lot of access to influential people, people who create the material society. It is also an entertainment subculture. Up to the early 1950s, before so much TV, Analog could have been the primary entertainment medium for this group of one third of America's technical intelligentsia. It is known that Albert Einstein had a subscription, though it was certainly not his main source of entertainment.

Campbell, for all of his faults, had an interestingly wise outlook on the place of entertainment in humanity. This was well expressed in an essay he wrote, 'The Place of Science Fiction', for the book Modern Science Fiction: Its Meaning and Its Future. He noted that in our modern civilization which has major libraries, most of the contents of the libraries consist of fiction, with a lesser amount of science and an even lesser amount of history. He

saw that the triumph of four thousand years of culture did not lead to libraries full of information so much as libraries full of tales of "dreams, wishes, hopes, and fears." He found that a natural expression of humanity, for to him man was "an idealist first, and a realist second." The fictional entertainment expresses the idealistic strivings of humanity, while the realistic, factual nonfiction documents humanity's efforts to achieve those ideals. Accordingly, he saw science fiction as the cutting edge of mankind's expression of ideals. He once said, "My kind of science fiction never pretended it was kidding."

As alluded to in the last chapter, John Wood Campbell, Jr. (1910-1971) was somewhat of a cult figure, with similar problems to Carl Jung. Like Jung, Campbell got too much into mysticism and alienated much of the scifi community.⁽¹⁾ He took a great interest in psychic phenomena such as ESP and dowsing. Shades of Jung! But the only shades, since he considered psychoanalysis a form of superstition rather than a valid attempt at science. Ironically, his brand of scientific psychoanalysis was Dianetics, a combination of the lie detector and watered-down Freudianism. For that matter, he considered most of psychology as superstition. One editorial on the subject he titled 'The Modern Black Arts.'

But those editorials were more than the groushings of an aging crank. They were a monthly fixture of the magazine, carrying a wild twisting of thinking to examine various problems or aspects of the world from new perspectives. An excellent sampling can be found in John W. Campbell, Collected Editorials from Analog.

Writer Harry Harrison's introduction to the book sums up Campbell's impact: "When I was fifteen years old I thought John W. Campbell was God." One famous editorial against the Vietnam War, written in 1965, began, "I think that if I were the average Vietnamese, I'd want the Communists to hurry up and win the civil war, and get the Americans out." Later editorials and published stories in the magazine looked at the war from other positions.

Whether the topic was the humanities, the sciences, politics, social relations, or science fiction, Campbell could come up with a fresh take on things and get the reader thinking, right after the reader got over the shock of having such new ideas unexpectedly come from out of nowhere. All of this, plus smart science fiction and smarter fact articles, humbly sitting on the pages of a drugstore digest, renewed every month.

It was possible to overlook Campbell's crackpot leanings and take inspiration from his independent thinking on other topics. Not that he didn't alienate some readers and lose some writers because of his beliefs, as his letters column showed and as the recollections of writers like Lester del Rey attest to (del Rey remained a friend who continued to sell stories to him). Sometimes, Campbell even stirred up the federal government. Perhaps the most famous incident is the investigation into the circumstances of a story about atomic weapons, published during World War Two.

The story was 'Deadline' by Cleve Cartmill, in the March, 1944 issue (then named Astounding). In the tale, a commando infiltrates

enemy territory to blow up facilities housing the first atomic bomb. The bomb was made from uranium 235, just as the real one is, but the story occurred on another planet. The enemy was similar to the Nazis of World War Two, which added to the public appeal of the wartime magazine.

Wartime censorship covered the mass media of America, to keep out military information the fascists might use, or industrial information that saboteurs could use. The American media did a good job of voluntary compliance, with occasional nudgings from official watchdogs. And one nudge came from an officer in the Intelligence and Security Division of the Manhattan Engineer District, which was the code name for the atomic bomb project. Campbell and Cartmill were interviewed separately by agents of the Counter Intelligence Corps and the FBI. The feds were persuaded that the information in the story came from the author's and editor's knowledge of physics, but they continued to interview others and put a mail watch on Cartmill.

Reviewing the affair in 1984, Albert I. Berger (q.v.) concluded that part of the government's motivation was concern for the secrecy within the Manhattan Project, wherein only the top levels were supposed to know the big picture about what was being created. And Astounding was a magazine that all the lower technicians and secretaries could pick up at their corner drugstore.

Further evidence of the technical subculture which consumed Astounding occurred with a September, 1944 story by Lester del Rey,

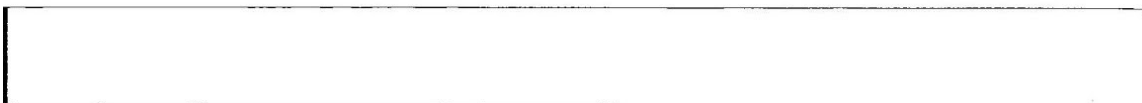


'Nerves.' This one was about an accident at a nuclear power plant in the future. The Oak Ridge plant, forerunner of the Oak Ridge National Laboratory, classified the magazine issue as secret, refusing access to workers without top clearance. This forced the curious to buy the magazine at newstands outside the plant.

Science fiction certainly concerned the feds during the war. Writer Philip Wylie also got attention for a story he wrote. Comic books were also not spared. Two Superman stories involving atomic power were censored by the FBI, as Superman writer Alvin Schwartz recalled.⁽²⁾

Campbell became editor of Astounding in 1937, staying until his death in 1971. He studied physics and engineering in college, but garnered fame as the man who added the storytelling quality to science fiction. He is the one person who solidified the entertainment subculture of scifi among the technical elite of the nation. He is rightfully acclaimed as the man who most made scifi what it is today. A portrait pantheon of the four biggest stars of science fiction is shown at the end of David Kyle's cited book, which is also a treasure trove of wonderful magazine art. The pantheon of ultimate historical figures begins with Jules Verne, followed by H.G. Wells, Hugo Gernsback, publisher of the first scifi magazines, and then Campbell is the fourth name.

As Brian W. Aldiss said, "Campbell gave you the future on your chipped plate." He discovered and developed many famous superstar writers, for example Robert A. Heinlein and Isaac Asimov. Heinlein ended up as the exemplar of right wing science fiction, while



Asimov ended up as the exemplar of liberal science fiction. Campbell spanned the spectrum, thinking with all of them.

Some of the chips on his plate included crackpot mysticism or other prejudices, but these pale in comparison to what cultural work he accomplished. Most scifi fans would like to forget his views on those subjects, in fact. It tarnishes the image and blunts his real message, which was the progress of civilization through science.

His name and memory are invoked at science fiction conventions as one of the central figures of worshipful admiration, for he achieved the status of a Man With The Word , the third stage in the Jungian hierarchy of the male archetype.

He became the focus of an entertainment subculture which places its imaginary heroes at the center stage of science. His proteges, writers like Heinlein and Asimov, have inspired many a future scientist and engineer to make the age of science a reality.

Campbell was replaced as editor by Ben Bova, followed by the current editor Stanley Schmidt. Both have continued the magazine's tradition of thought-provoking editorials, but no one has quite the eccentric access to controversy of Campbell. The editorials have not been as mind-blowing since, but they try. Guest editorials sometimes liven things up. Regardless, Analog has continued its tradition of brilliant science fiction, often winning awards, and successfully entertaining America's technologists.

SENSE OF WONDER

"Sense of wonder" is the closest thing to a universally acknowledged motivation to read and enjoy science fiction, from casual readers to hard core fans to technical subcultures like the readership of Analog. Number one fan Forrest J. Ackerman titled an anthology Gosh! Wow! (Sense of Wonder). Editor David Hartwell wrote an entire book on the subject, Age of Wonders. Common classifications of the history of scifi often describe the time when Hugo Gernsback published its first pulp magazines in the late 1920's and 1930's as the "Age of Wonder." A popular joke in the scifi community goes something like, "The age of wonder is ... thirteen."

That joke is the closest thing to a universal statement of self-deprecating humility among the scifi community. This is a recognition that the youthful view can be most possessed of that sense of wonder at the mystery and complexity of existence. One gets jaded as one ages; things no longer surprise with delight. It may always still be fun to learn new things, but the joy is muted as the fires of youth mellow. But in something fantastic like science fiction, the literate adults may recapture some of that youthful awe and wonder. It's a feeling which is part of the joys of reading.

There are other pleasurable motivations for reading, too, as anyone reading this book knows from personal experience. Scifi can appeal to others of those pleasures. In keeping with the war of the aliterate against the literate, much of juvenile scifi concerns the struggles of a minority of smart kids against a hostile world

which hates them just because they're smarter or otherwise more gifted than average. Marvel Comics capitalized on this with its main breadwinner title, The X-Men, something in the scifi category of genetic mutant supermen.

How does the sense of wonder relate to human psychological origins such as Jungian archetypes and mythic storytelling of violent heroes? Simple: express those things, and you will typically get a pleasurable sense of wonder as a response. Science fiction has a cousin genre where this is perhaps more easily identifiable.

That is called sword and sorcery, a part of the bigger field of fantasy literature. Sword and sorcery literature is probably the most direct expression of the ancient mythic forms. The history of the s+s field is closely tied to scifi history, with many writers and publishers in common. But since the operative force is sorcery instead of science, its heroes are not relevant to my study. Back to scientific wonders and heroes.

The criticism of scifi by its writers touches on the psychological aspects of the sense of wonder, and two important essays illuminate the positive and negative views. The negative view reduces to the charge that scifi is mainly childish escapism, while the positive view reduces to the claim that such childishness is part of growing up.

Thomas M. Disch's 1992 article in the distinguished mainstream magazine The Atlantic, 'Big Ideas and Dead End Thrills', is the epitome of the negative view. His title summed it up, together

with his conclusion that scifi should really be considered a branch of childrens' literature, thus making its self-important power fantasies acceptable up to a certain age limit. After that, there would be embarrassment at continuing to read the stuff. Most of us are probably familiar with those feelings, in fact. I certainly thought I had outgrown scifi at various points in my youth.

Disch covered a lot of ground in his essay, noting the retirement of many scifi writers and a trend among publishers to drop innovative writing for generic junk which sold the most copies. Publishers thereby contribute to the dumbing down of popular culture and the decline of literacy beyond limited vocabularies. The phrase "dead-end thrills" he took from another piece of scifi criticism by Lewis Shiner, the scifi writer noted earlier for his appeal to realism against violence.

Disch writes as an insider, a successful scifi writer who has won awards. He is a critic, not an enemy of the field. His psychological observations on the appeal to youth include the notion of the Big Idea, wherein some notion can change the world, possibly a notion that can be applied in the real world. He found that scifi could be "a natural playground for the harmless expression of Big Ideas" such as various utopias. But the idea of the Big Idea is another expression for the desire of youth to transform the world, or an expression of that rebellious energy of adolescence which has not yet been channelled into initiation into adult reality and society.

An article by Orson Scott Card in Amazing Stories,

'Adolescence and Adulthood in Science Fiction', can be balanced against Disch's charges. Card, writing five years before Disch, took a closer look at the appeal to youth of a particular kind of scifi, what he termed "character-oriented stories" which deal with "a significant change in the hero or other major characters." This is not necessarily Big Ideas, but the thrills in such stories could certainly evoke a sense of wonder to match any other science fiction. However, the thrills lead to anything but dead ends.

Card was writing from a thumbnail typlogy of youth psychology and a particular literary criticism. He held that the best value of any storytelling, whether in literature or any medium, was to change the viewpoint of the audience. Accordingly, he found adolescents the best audience for stories since they are so open to change and influence. He proceeded to distinguish childhood from adolescence from adulthood, in an elegant system based upon rewards and penalties.

Childhood he defined as security without control. Adolescence he defined as freedom without control or connectedness. Adulthood he defined as control without freedom, a larger identity encumbered by responsibility for others. The transitions between these social roles were what interested him. He proposed that the change in character stories is typically from adolescence to adulthood, or childhood to adolescence. The appeal of scifi character stories for adolescents is thus in their exploration of the "preparation for permanent commitment" or "taking responsibility for others". He found this to be one of the most

important functions of writing, since the task of storytelling "is to teach us how to be human".

The relation of this to Joseph Campbell's heroic stages and the Jungian analysis of initiation is rather direct. The transition to adulthood from adolescence is exactly what the initiation ritual is about. The adolescent hero in Card's character-oriented scifi story is undergoing some form of separation from society, initiatory experience, and return to society as a committed adult. Card recognizes this, and notes that "that myth is an archetype that insists on showing up in all storytelling arts".

Card contrasts this interpretation with the "nerd theory" which boils down to accusations of escapist power fantasies for bright misfit kids. Disch's essay contains elements of the nerd theory, but Disch is certainly too good a writer to be ignorant of the connection between mythology and literature, and he was probably familiar with Card's essay anyway. What can be said of Disch's critique of dead end thrills is that he looks at failed initiations, conditions of arrested adolescence which do not lead to adulthood. A third essay addresses this problem mythologically.

MYTHOLOGY

In 1988, Norman Spinrad wrote an article, 'Emperor of Everything', for his book review column in Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine. It starts off with a funny description of the titular formula, sort of a ribald telling of the outlines for the

movie 'Star Wars' combined with 'Dune'. The hero defeats the villain, marries the princess, rules the universe, and all ends well until the sequel comes along. Spinrad then proceeded to compare this generic formula with Joseph Campbell's Hero pattern as found in The Hero With a Thousand Faces. Preceding this, he acknowledged the Hero pattern as an archetype deriving from the collective unconscious of the human species. As Card did, Spinrad qualified his essay by noting that the Hero was one template for fiction, while others existed such as the Trickster, love story, tragedy, bedroom farce, and picaresque odyssey.

Spinrad's point is that the hero of Joseph Campbell's form is an Everyman on a quest, discovering his own spiritual nature and helping the audience to fit into their world and society. He finds notable examples of such democratic urges in some of the classics of scifi, such as Alfred Bester's The Stars My Destination, in which the hero shares the secret of teleportation with all of humanity. But there is good scifi and there is bad scifi, and too often Spinrad finds the quality goal of the mythic hero tale is not achieved. Rather, the heroic quest devolves into a generic power fantasy, wherein the hero achieves so much responsibility that he remains irresponsible. Frank Herbert's Dune novels provide an example of this. The hero therein really does become the emperor of the universe.

Interestingly, Spinrad takes Orson Scott Card to task for his own novels. He finds Card's most successful series, the Ender Wiggan saga, as a failed hero form. He acknowledges Card's mastery

of the Campbellian Hero formula in his earlier novels Songmaster and Hart's Hope. Part of the explanation for the failure of the later novels, Spinrad guessed, was the temptation for the scifi writer to identify with his hero so much that he turns him into a mouthpiece for his own philosophy, and gets sucked into the power fantasy for his own satisfaction. And, as Spinrad notes, the commercial pressure to write such generic power potboilers is very strong, for that is what publishers know they can sell to the alienated adolescents. It's a small step away from the final message of the Hero to a super happy ending which will make lots of bucks.

This is part of that temptation which Thomas Disch condemned in 'Big Ideas and Dead End Thrills'. If the rubes want entertainment, give 'em the works. If they want enlightenment, send 'em to college. Again, Spinrad echoes Disch's criticism of publishers as cynical businessmen out to make money.

Publishers do have valid commercial concerns, and "business sense" means knowing how to make enough money to stay in business. Part of the business sense of scifi publishers is a working assumption that there is an audience turnover for scifi every few years. There are different estimates of the length of the turnover period, from the insiders of publishing. Top editor David Hartwell notes that three to five years is a common assumption. Lester del Rey, a writer, editor, and big name publisher, notes that "there is a new audience every year or so" in the teenage market, which can facilitate some titles staying in print forever.

I have never seen any mention of the correspondence between audience turnover cycles and the initiation stage of youth psychology. Publishers seem to assume it, perhaps under the rough concept of "growing out of it", but they do not note the actual psychic needs which the youth are expressing when they buy the books and magazines. Critics come close to it at times, as when Card notes the adolescent transition to adult commitment. But even the critics do not equate the period of intense teenage interest with the same time of life when youth would undergo initiation rituals.

Possibly part of this omission is due to the fact that initiation rituals generally take less time than a turnover cycle of one to a few years. The period of intense interest could then be seen as a modern form of initiation-by-literature, in which it takes a year or so of reading to acquire the change in world view from initiation. More commonly, as per the condemnations of generic junk, the turnover cycle could be seen as another example of failed initiation, in which the teenage readers keep coming back to the source of wonder, and don't get changed enough to take their place in the adult world. They finally give up on the stuff, call it escapist power fantasies and really do outgrow it. If they're lucky they find their initiation somewhere else. Perhaps in a job, perhaps in school, perhaps in an avocation guided by elders.

There is another factor which could be at work. How long does the Hero's story take? It has three stages: separation, adventure, and return. Some of these Hero cycles do take place over years.

Humanity, which has evolved a longer adolescence than other animals, has also apparently evolved archetypes of Initiation which can take years. That scifi which could best suit this need might indeed be the unending series of books which take the hero on a years-long journey through life changes.

This raises the question: does the reader who completes such a cycle of books ever emerge more committed to society? Well, yes. Many scientists and engineers were spurred into their life callings by teenage interests in scifi. What of the rest of us who have not been so lucky as to be cut out for science? Well, many fans are not scientists either. That's another subculture which will be dealt with soon. What of the "casual" reader, who may be intensely interested in a long series and then apparently "grow out of it" after a few years? This could be the closest thing to an initiation that the person gets in life. A criterion of quality could be made for how well the scifi in this time adapts the young reader to get on with joining adult society. This may sound like conformist, socially-redeeming value, repressive regimentation instead of scifi's appeal to expand the imagination. But a mythic initiation does expand the imagination, as much as anything can. Some primitive who believes he's a bird spirit soaring through the heavens has had his mind blown as much as any LSD could. That scifi which taps into the sense of wonder and brings the wonderer back into society is transforming the world on a personal level, which is the closest real thing to the outer urges of rebellious youth.

Science fiction writers are not ignorant of the mental powers of mythic storytelling. Spinrad and Card are not rare exceptions in the field for their knowledge of mythology. Roger Zelazny is well known as a user of myth for his stories.⁽³⁾ Del Rey (q.v.) notes the important need for myth that readers have, but he doesn't quite connect that to initiation needs. For all the how-to-write-sf articles and books and workshops, one sees little discussion as if the writers didn't want to expose trade secrets, similar to screenwriters who study Joseph Campbell but seldom give him credit. But there is one glaring exception which just stands out.

In 1978, the Science Fiction Writers of America and Science Fiction Research Associates published an anthology-textbook, Science Fiction: Contemporary Mythology. Here they blew the doors to any trade secrets wide open. The book is divided into ten sections: ambiguity, the remarkable adventure, new dimensions, aliens, the scientist, the machine and the robot, androids and cyborgs, the city, utopias and dystopias, and apocalypse. Master authors and scholars wrote introductory pieces to sections and stories.

In the chapter on ambiguity, Patricia Warrick cited Joseph Campbell, Sir James Frazer, Carl Jung, and Claude Levi-Strauss. She discussed the differences between scifi and old myths, such as the ambiguity of scifi myths compared to the clarity of the older ones. She noted that scifi myths happen in the future, whereas the old myths happen outside time. Further, the audience for the old myths "believed the story was true". And in scifi myths, the

ambiguity results from social change and uncertainty about our place in the network of nature.

In the chapter on the remarkable adventure, Philip Jose Farmer and Beverly Friend explicated Joseph Campbell's book The Hero With a Thousand Faces. They noted that Campbell had found four functions of myth. The metaphysical-mystical function they equated to the sense of wonder in scifi. The cosmological function is the knowledge of the universe, what we have science for. The sociological function is maintenance of society, and they cited Robert Heinlein as a paragon of that. The psychological function they noted as individual harmonization, and "the science fiction hero is at home in his technological world."

In the chapter on the scientist, L. Sprague de Camp and Thomas D. Clareson did not cite Jung or Campbell, but they did cover the evolution of the scientist as a hero and his subsequent demise into lesser status in popular portrayals. They held that the current public attitude to science could be seen in the portrayals of scientists. Undoubtedly they are right, and it seems that scientists have regained some of their heroic status in the 1990s.

Other nonfiction contributors to the book were Frederik Pohl, Robert Silverberg, Charles Elkins, Pamela Sargent, James Gunn, Isaac Asimov, David Hartwell, George Zebrowski, Theodore R. Cogswell, Ralph S. Clem, Martin Harry Greenberg, Joseph D. Olander, Jack Williamson, and David Ketterer.

Who wrote mythic stories which were collected into this anthology? Poul Anderson (the most explicitly mythic story, 'Goat

Song' from 1967), Alan E. Nourse, Arthur C. Clarke (one of the "big three" authors, besides Asimov and Heinlein), Cordwainer Smith (pseudonym of the psychological warfare expert Paul Linebarger), James Blish, Philip Jose Farmer, Robert Sheckley (who specializes in the picaresque, satirical heroic quest), Terry Carr, Philip K. Dick, Donald Wandrei, Theodore Sturgeon (better known to the public as the imaginary person he inspired, Kurt Vonnegut's Kilgore Trout), Larry Niven, John W. Campbell Jr. (a 1934 classic, before he became the ultimate editor), Brian W. Aldiss (author of Billion Year Spree in 1973 - see next paragraph), Gordon R. Dickson, Ursula K. Le Guin, Damon Knight, Thomas N. Scortia, Frederik Pohl, J.G. Ballard, Robert Silverberg, Hugo Gernsback (a 1911 novel excerpt), Fritz Leiber, Cyril Kornbluth, Roger Zelazny, and George Alec Effinger. In other words, almost all of the top writers of science fiction up to 1978 were included.

Further example can be made of Brian W. Aldiss, who updated his 1973 history of scifi into the expanded 1986 title Trillion Year Spree. This is one of the ultimate books about science fiction, and it won a Hugo Award from scifi fandom for best nonfiction of the year. It also mentions Carl Jung six times and Sigmund Freud four times. Aldiss starts one chapter with a quote from Jung, and also contemplates putting another quote on his title page. The first page of the second chapter, on H.G. Wells, introduces Freud and psychoanalysis and archetypes. Literary archetypes were mentioned in the introduction while discussing Gothic fantasy. The last and first scifi examples cited in the

book are the only overtly mythological ones, Mary Shelley's 1818 novel Frankenstein: or, the Modern Prometheus and Robert Holdstock's 1984 fantasy-sf novel Mythago Wood. Holdstock was explicitly Jungian, giving the wood the power to manifest archetypes. Aldiss equates Holdstock's primal forest with the Jungian collective unconscious, or racial memory, saying the book is as much about inner space as fantasy.

As for the contributors to the SFWA-SFRA anthology, these people knew what they were doing. The title of the book says it: science fiction is contemporary mythology. At least, part of it is, or rather parts. Let's turn to another subculture which partakes of mythological urges.

FAN CONVENTIONS

Lester del Rey's book on science fiction mentions "subculture" in its subtitle. That is The World of Science Fiction: 1926-1976, The History of a Subculture. His first page spells out an excellent definition of an entertainment subculture. He points out that scifi fandom makes a genuine subculture because it has a complex of activities, traditions, accepted beliefs, conventions, jargon for occasions, ethics and values. He notes that the annual worldcons, or World Science Fiction Conventions, provide the greatest unifying force and common goal for the scifi community.

These conventions began in 1939. Attending fans vote for their favorite stories of the year, and Hugo Awards (named after Hugo Gernsback) are given in various categories such as best novel,

short story, dramatic presentation, fan publication, etc. The other big award is the Nebula, given by the Science Fiction Writers of America at their annual meeting. One might expect the number of voters for Hugos to surpass the voters for the Nebulas by thousands, but such is not the case. Locus, a scifi magazine, listed the total votes for the Hugo at the 51st worldcon in San Francisco in its October, 1993 issue. The totals ranged from 361 to 760, of 5,834 eligible voters. The fans apparently vote only when they feel qualified. The highest vote (1,132) was for a future location of a convention. The total attendance at the convention ranged from 7,100 to 8,122. The 1939 convention had an attendance of 200, followed by 125 in 1940, 70 in 1941 and 120 in 1946. Fandom has grown steadily with the scifi publishing industry since the end of World War Two.

The two big official activities at the worldcons are the masquerade show and the awards ceremony, held on different nights. The masquerade show is a fan competition, with a panel of judges who present awards. Contestants get a few moments of exposure to the audience, and the event takes hours, followed by the awards and a masquerade ball in which anyone can mingle among the costumed fans. This is one of the more blatant ritualistic practices, and the fans are only one step removed from the primitives who believe themselves possessed by the spirits of whatever their costumes signify. But do the costumed fans undergo an initiation? What principles or secrets of the society are they instructed in by the elders?

That happens at the awards ceremony on the following night. Various elders put in appearances at the podium, along with younger writers, artists and fans. Number one fan, the aging Forrest J. Ackerman (who is a wonderful, nice man) fulfills the role of high priest as he makes his statement and gives his blessing to the event. As mentioned earlier, the name of John W. Campbell, Jr. is invoked. In San Francisco, this was done by Analog editor Stanley Schmidt. A special slide presentation was given on the history of the Hugo Awards, which thereby gave the history of modern science fiction. Of course, initiatory education can also occur at most any of the other gatherings and events which occur as part of the convention.

These are the two main events. The convention also includes lectures, readings, workshops, art exhibits, dances, tours, publishers' parties, private parties and dealers' booths where many things can be bought, from books to toys. There is an opening and a closing ceremony. There are also a couple types of unofficial social mixers, to facilitate good times and the forming of new friendships. These are the parties which fans have in their hotel rooms, and the "con suites" in which fans gather in public rooms to talk about anything.(4)

Cultural relativist anthropologists would compare this to some tropical cultures which organized their year around a festival, or religious societies which make pilgrimages.

The issue of how much scifi fandom fulfills all of the functions of a religion is also interesting. Fandom itself is



split into two factions of "Fandom Is Just A Goddamned Hobby" (FIJAGH) and "Fandom Is A Way Of Life" (FIAWOL). However, hobby or way of life, it may not matter as far as religious satisfaction is concerned.

Famous scifi writer Theodore Sturgeon addressed the religious issue in an essay, stating "Take the temples away from the people and they will worship a football hero or a movie star ... And indeed, science meets the specifications for a deity more than any other single thing in the current cultural cosmos."⁽⁵⁾ Sturgeon saw all of modern society as capable of science worship, with scifi a safe target for rebellious contempt. He went on to examine various stories which dealt with religion and morals. It is hard to believe that Sturgeon, one of the most poetic and insightful scifi writers of all time, could fail to see the religious aspects to scifi itself. This may be a case of the prophet failing to see that the masses are taking him literally instead of metaphorically like he intends.

If a worshipped hero is imaginary, does that make fandom less than a religion? Forrest Ackerman once said, "Science fiction is my only god and religion", but he is the number one fan, after all. Hartwell (q.v.) considers the question of how much of fandom is religion. He finds religion an overstatement, but he does see that the writers are prophets who work in the ancient religious tradition of tales of wonder. In this context, he explains C.S. Lewis's concept of the mythic as a fantastic story which inspires awe. Readers of scifi are then partaking of mythic

transformations, or the sense of wonder.

Concerning traditional religion, Phyllis and Nora Day have some survey results of fans which show non-scifi ties. They took questionnaires to conventions in the Midwest in 1982, and analyzed about 700 responses. They found 37% were agnostics or atheists, 41% unaffiliated with organized religion, and 20% affiliated to organized religions, mainly Christian or Jewish. They also found that 19% believed witchcraft was a religion, and 15% considered themselves pagans.

Frederick A. Kreuziger, in his book The Religion of Science Fiction, claims that scifi functions as a religion, and he examines it for the perspective of apocalyptic thinking. He finds that scifi carries the central myth of science and technology: progress. The ritual of this myth is research and development, part of the stuff of scifi stories. As with other religions, scifi has a belief in the future transformation of humanity, or apocalypse. He views scifi as a secular religion, in which myths originated in stories and became religion. This is a reversal of the usual process of myth originating in religion and becoming literature.

Perhaps we can answer the question of religion versus mythic satisfaction if we adopt the thumbnail definition that mythology is dead religion: that which was once believed to be true but is now merely an entertaining story. Those members of fandom who really do believe that one day there will be faster-than-light travel, teleportation, time travel, ad absurdum, could well be the true believers who take scifi into active religion. They still enjoy

tales of mythic heroes with everyone else who reads scifi. The extra belief is not essential to the psychic needs for archetypal figures or social initiation.

This raises the further question of the connection between reification and religion, and thereby violence. Taking an abstract something literally and making it real is reification. This is the line that separates the critical thinkers from the masses. Speaking of the human need for myth, Lester del Rey put it in a very graceful way when he wrote, "marvelous allegory for the thoughtful and wonders for all others - the majority." This is the kind of gentle charm that does not inspire religious fanatic assassins. Weak-minded adults must interpret things literally, so the religious fundamentalists we will always have with us.

Weak minds also must resort to violence in social conflicts if they can't reason out a compromise for mutual satisfaction. This is the meaning of Isaac Asimov's phrase, "Violence is the last resort of the incompetent." From a Jungian perspective, why are those minds weak and incompetent? Because they can't consciously control the archetypal forces which are pressing for literal violence.

We all have reification built into us, from the smartest genius to the dumbest fool. No matter how smart we are, we can turn off our critical thinking and enjoy a tale for its reification of wonders, and relax into the sense of awe which it inspires. Somewhere in the back of our minds we think "Remember, this is a marvelous allegory." We may even engage critical analysis and

appreciate the clever artistry of the story's message. Like sex, enjoying a tale of wonder strikes chords common to all of humanity, no intelligence required. Luckiest are those who can derive a sense of wonder from reading. It's an ability which can be measured in many ways, and most people don't have it equally.

How many of the fans and readers of scifi go too far into reification instead of enjoying the marvelous allegory? If we consider the juvenile audience, probably most. If the young readers grow out of scifi it may be because they are not appreciating the allegory as mature adults. Adult fans present another issue of reification, but it is not so embarrassing if we consider that in primitive societies the adults also accessed archetypes by costume and reification. Adult masquerades are fun. Believing in future scientific progress can be justified faith.

People don't go too far so that they use violence to maintain their scifi reifications. Outside fandom, a fantasy role playing game supposedly once inspired a teen death when the participants lost touch with reality, but this was such an isolated and rare event that it was made into a TV movie. On a similar note, in 1988 Sharyn McCrumb wrote a funny murder mystery novel, Bimbos of the Death Sun, in which a sword and sorcery fan kills an author at a scifi convention. The fan wears the costume of his sword-slinging idol, and can't abide that the author killed off the character. McCrumb followed this with another spoof of fandom in 1992, Zombies of the Gene Pool. In this funny sequel, an older fan kills to preserve his false identity, having traded names with another fan

when they were younger. Such exaggerations serve as a tonic for a fandom which will never resort to murder.

As for whether I am a fan or not, the answer is no. Real science fiction fans may have already noticed this by my constant use of the term "scifi", which they have considered an anachronism. At least, this was the case as of del Rey's book in 1977. Perhaps fandom has changed and accepted the term. It was promoted by Forrest Ackerman, who lobbies for its acceptance. He could have finally succeeded after all these decades, for all I know. I wish him well; I do my part.

I once met Ackerman at his home in Los Angeles in 1989. I was vacationing with friends, and I had read of his archives and how they were open to public visits. After calling ahead, I left my friends at Disneyland and drove over to his house alone. Even though it was not a usual weekday for public access, he allowed me in and let his assistant give me a brief tour of the library and collection of movie memorabilia. I was then free to peruse the shelves and posters unattended. Forry was very friendly, autographing souvenirs and having a picture taken with me. He is not the center of any crackpot cult, nor does he appear to be possessed by any demonic archetypes. He is a gracious, warm, intelligent man who has done his part to make the world a better place. Perhaps that makes him some kind of real hero. He has certainly had a lifetime of imaginary heroes to draw upon for inspiration.

CHAPTER THREE: MOVIES AND TELEVISION

(Wife to husband:) "Is anything wrong?"

(Husband, putting down the phone:) "Chris was killed by a bear, and Edna died after giving birth to a baby girl."

Jim Backus, in 'Ice Palace', 1960

And now for the most popular medium of all: the visual mode of moving pictures, which exists as movies and television. The reason for this popularity is easy to understand: it requires so little thinking on the part of the audience. All you have to do is sit and watch and the story unfolds before your eyes. The characters move and talk and express emotions and thoughts without any influence or effort of the viewer.

Of course, this mode of storytelling has a respected ancestor: theater. Theater has a respectable intellectual reputation nowadays, a sort of return to its ancient Greek roots. In the days of the Greek city states, theater was a form of civics education for the male population who had the right to vote. Weighty issues of political leadership were presented, such as the notion that kings should not sleep with their mothers (Oedipus), or that war would end if women refused to sleep with men (Lysistrata). I feel my tongue slipping into my cheek, so I had best restrict myself to the chapter's subjects.

But one last remark about the Greeks, or "The Greek" as scholars of the past called him: Aristotle. In his book Poetics, he held as the justification of drama that it is a form of teaching

people something important: with an entertaining story. He listed two sources of "poetry": the urge for imitation and the natural desire to learn. Learning gives pleasure to all men, but those who aren't philosophers have limited capacity. Thus, they derive pleasure in learning from imitation, or poetry, i.e. drama as he meant it.

That is what critics mean when they refer to quality drama, whether theater or TV or movies. It teaches us something at the same time as entertaining us. Again, we have popular culture fulfilling its obligation to educate, as mentioned in the previous chapter, but in the nonprint media this time. And once again, we have the phenomenon of Sturgeon's Law, in which at least 90% of these nonprint media do not teach us anything, leaving aside the question of entertainment, and 90% of it is garbage. But the ostensible goal is similar to the "literary" qualities mentioned at the start of the previous chapter.

Anyway, for all of those literary qualities and fulfilling Aristotle's dictum of learning, Shakespeare did it best. Really, I sometimes feel that we could have had an end to all fiction after he wrote and the world would not be any poorer. The loss would be in applying such wisdom as his to modern situations. Thus, we benefit from Charles Dickens' social portrayals of industrial poverty in the 19th century, or modern tragedies like Henry Miller's play Death of a Salesman.

And the heroes of our immortal urges have to show up in modern theatrical dramas of TV or movies, grappling with both the issues

and the technology of the day, or the future days.

PRINCIPLES OF DRAMATIC CONFLICT

The essence of drama is conflict. This is the first principle of fictional entertainment, and any book or instructor of screenwriting will emphasize it. My explication of this will come from personal contacts besides the written word.

In my course of learning about writing, I took a couple courses from the Film Department at City College of San Francisco. My instructor, Ken Valentine, was a screenwriter with some credits to his name, such as working on Francis Ford Coppola's movie 'One From the Heart', reputed to be a box office flop but a critical success. Ken had also been an owner of a movie theater at one time, and so he knew the business from both endpoints: beginning creation and audience appreciation. Most of what I have to say in this section comes from him.⁽¹⁾

I have also read about a dozen "how to write a screenplay" books, and the common ideas of those will also come into the mix. However, as further proof of Ken's credentials, I note that he only considered one book on screenwriting any good: Directing by Michael Rabiger, a textbook that includes writing in its scope. All of the popular how-to-do-it trade paperbacks he considered junk, and I see why after I took his first class. Most of Ken's teaching is not contained in Rabiger's textbook, though. As for where he got his knowledge, Ken had a Hollywood screenwriter as a mentor.

To return to the first principle, what do screenwriters mean



when they say that conflict is essential to drama? They mean that it holds an audience's attention, no matter what kind of conflict it is. It could be the conflict in crossing a room. Sounds boring, doesn't it? It could be, but a screenwriter may jazz it up by putting in some business such as conflict with the environment. The actor bumps into something as he walks across the room. It looks like he may fall or something may break. People will perk up their attention.

The conflict is usually thought of as interpersonal. There is the thematic conflict which gives the movie its purpose for existence, and this involves the struggle of the protagonist who wants something that he cannot get. There are obstacles in his or her way, and the movie is the story of overcoming these obstacles. The protagonist may be opposed by an antagonist. While the word "protagonist" comes from the Greek for "first actor", the word "antagonist" comes from the Greek for "struggle against". Like walking across a room, a movie could still be very boring if it's just a story of a protagonist achieving a goal, even if there's an antagonist.

That's why there is conflict in every scene, in every interaction between people, any people. The same principle that makes people pay attention when furniture is bumped into will make them pay attention when friction occurs between people. It may be comparable to furniture, mere bickering or opposition on a trivial point. For example, when someone enters a room, instead of merely saying, "Hi, dear." he may complain in passing "I got my feet wet

outside." His conversational partner is under no obligation to respond directly to the substance of what he just said. He or she may completely ignore it and talk about whatever carries the plot of the story forward. Not only does this save time for the movie but it is also realistic, for people don't always converse in a logical, sequential, linear fashion.

This kind of conflict means that there will always be a one-up, one-down nature to the interactions. Someone loses in the interaction and someone wins. The man with the wet feet loses because he doesn't get any compensation for his trouble, or he may win if this makes the other person do something for him. This one-upmanship constitutes what is called a zero-sum game. In such a game, the loss and gain sum up to zero, cancelling each other out in the grand score.

Such zero-sum conflicts can be in the context of the main plot of the movie, and carry over into specific scenes. For example, in 'Casablanca' various authorities may "hold the cards" and dominate a scene when interacting with Humphrey Bogart, who plays a nightclub owner. The French prefect of police is one-down when interacting with the Nazi major, from the moment the major arrives on a plane. When Bogart shoots the major, the prefect arrives and again holds the cards. The climax of the movie occurs when the prefect abolishes the conflict between himself and Bogart. Instead of having Bogart arrested, he tells his policemen to "round up the usual suspects." When I first saw this movie in a college theater in 1974, the audience cheered at that moment. It is a superb

example of zero-sum conflict.

Conflict also applies to romance and love in the movies. The classic technique to start a romance is to have the future lovers "meet cute", or hate each other at first sight in other words. They then have obstacles to overcome in their falling in love. Overcoming these obstacles provides new scenes of conflict.

This is still not the essence of why people go to see movies. They go for the emotional connection, to have a vicarious experience with a fictional person. The emotional experience may be the scifi sense of wonder at the universe, but they will still do that through a character. Without a protagonist, it's just a scientific documentary. Add in a person that it's happening to, and you get experience. The mind-blowing cosmic trip scene in '2001' happens to an astronaut in a space suit, even if we usually see what he sees. The principles of any story telling apply in movies, in that you must care about the characters to identify with them.

Once you have emotional connection with characters, you can share their beliefs and their experience. In short, you have to fall in love with them or befriend them, almost from their first appearance. You have to get to know them very quickly. How do screenwriters do this? By having characters make decisions. Every scene presents a potential conflict, and thus there is a crisis latent in every scene. The character has to respond to this crisis by making a decision to act. His action defines his personality, and thus we know him and can like him.

For example, say two cars drive by a roadside accident. One driver is a doctor, and the other driver is an illegal alien. Each has a decision to make in this crisis. The doctor may stop or drive on, and we would know something about his ethics. Likewise the illegal. He may put saving another's life over the risk to his discovery by the authorities, and so stop and help. This would tell us a lot about his morality, and we would like him for knowing him so well. We can come to know such fictional characters so well by how they respond in crises and conflicts that we may feel we know them better than real people. Perhaps we feel that we don't know our friends as well.

Once we know and like a character, then we will follow their beliefs. But note that we do this through an emotional connection shown by behavior in a conflict, rather than by a dispassionate presentation of abstract thought. Studio head Sam Goldwyn once said that if screenwriters wanted to send a message to the American public then they should use Western Union instead of his studio. Movies are about emotional experience first, and ideas come after if at all.

The biggest crisis decision constitutes the theme of the movie, and the basic story structure includes it. An outline of story can now be assembled from the foregoing principles. First there is an inciting incident, which sets up some problem. Then there are progressive complications, the obstacles for the hero. These problems culminate in the big crisis decision. There is then an obligatory scene of the result of the decision and how it solves

the problem. There follows the resolution of the story, with possible denouements to tie up loose ends. And what are the two standard texts that most screenwriters swear by for learning the tricks of the trade and possible story ingredients? Aristotle's Poetics and Campbell's The Hero With a Thousand Faces.

These principles of conflict easily apply to the story of the hero, since a hero has to overcome obstacles to be a hero. Conflict is the stuff of the hero's achievement. The mythic hero had conflicts with supernatural entities, and the obstacles could be magical, physical, or due to the cunning of another person. The hero in the age of science could still have any of those problems, and his technology could help him. Thus, the modern hero could use technology either as the boon to bring back to the normal world, or as the magical tool to overcome a particular obstacle. So-called "action" heroes often use the technology of guns to overcome obstacles, but scientists use their laboratory equipment as the magic tools.

THE STORY OF LOUIS PASTEUR - AND OTHERS

Louis Pasteur (1822-1895) was a real scientist, one of the immortal names to rank alongside Charles Darwin and Sigmund Freud. Pasteur is called the father of modern bacteriology, for he championed the germ theory of disease. Among other accomplishments, he created immunizations for sheep anthrax and rabies in humans. Pasteurized milk is named after his process of killing off bacteria by heating. The British surgeon Baron Joseph Lister (1827-1912)

developed antiseptic methods based on Pasteur's work. Listerine is named after Lister. A starship in 'Star Trek, the Next Generation' is named after Pasteur.

Pasteur has another rare honor: a mainstream Hollywood movie was made of his life, and it won Academy Awards. This was in 1936, when movies were beginning their peak period of quality, a golden age that lasted for about two decades. The idea of a biography of a scientist was something to try, before audience returns diminished studio interest in later decades. There are very few movies of real scientists or inventors or other similar intellectuals. But when the real people show up in movies, their stories become tales of imaginary heroes, with fictional dialog and created social conflicts to match up to the real conflicts in their lives.

In 'The Story of Louis Pasteur', Paul Muni played Pasteur, and his chief opponent was played by Fritz Leiber Sr., the father of the famous science fiction writer. Leiber played a French doctor who did not believe in the germ theory of disease. In a dramatic challenge to Pasteur, he grabs a syringe with rabies and injects himself. He doesn't become ill, providing Pasteur with a valuable clue for developing a vaccine. Pasteur wins him over to his cause. The famous Dr. Lister comes over from England to observe Pasteur's campaign to develop a rabies vaccine. A time limit is built into the story as Pasteur races to save a young farm boy who has been bitten by a rabid dog. It has all the ingredients of a prime story: a nemesis (rabies), a villain who undergoes enantiodromia (a

favorite Jungian concept of reversal of personality qualities), a wise elder to bestow his blessing (Lister, although in reality he was five years younger than Pasteur), and a time lock.

Muni got the Academy Award for best actor, and the two screenwriters got the Academy Award for best screenplay. If one doesn't count the trend to give recent awards to "disease of the week" stories, this may be the only movie about a real scientific hero to ever win the big award. And we also won't count the stories of totally imaginary scientific heroes who show up in science fiction movies. In fact, let's count just how many movies have ever been made about such real heroes, whether doctors, scientists, engineers, or inventors. Most of these movies can be found in Leslie Halliwell's guide book The Filmgoer's Companion, under 'scientists' or 'inventors'.

Pasteur's story was made in 1936. We also have 'Yellow Jack' (1938) about Dr. Walter Reed's search for a yellow fever cure, 'The Story of Alexander Graham Bell' (1939), 'Dr. Ehrlich's Magic Bullet' (1940) about a venereal disease cure, 'Young Tom Edison' (1940), 'Edison, The Man' (1940), 'Madame Curie' (1943), 'The Great Moment' (1944) about the inventor of anesthetic laughing gas, 'A Genius in the Family' (1946, also titled 'So Goes My Love') about the inventor of the submachine gun, 'The Magic Box' (1951) about the inventor of movies, 'Breaking the Sound Barrier' (1952), 'Carbine Williams' (1952), 'The Dam Busters' (1954) including the inventor of the bouncing bomb in World War Two, John Huston's 'Freud' (1962), 'Galileo' (1973), 'Sakharov' (1984), 'Tucker'

(1988) about an automobile inventor, 'Fat Man and Little Boy' (1989) about the atomic bomb project and physicist J. Robert Oppenheimer, and 1993's 'And The Band Played On' about the search to identify the AIDS virus. That's nineteen, and I suppose I've missed a few. Maybe there's around twenty to thirty. Now, there's over 30,000 titles registered with the Motion Picture Association of America. A good guidebook listing movies on video could have over 20,000 titles, so we're looking at one in a thousand, or one tenth of one percent of all the mainstream movies. This includes British with Hollywood stuff.

Freud does make more appearances if we add in total fiction. He also shows up in '19/19' (1985), 'The Secret Diary of Sigmund Freud' (1984), and 'The Seven Percent Solution' (1976) where he teams up with Sherlock Holmes. Albert Einstein makes a notable appearance with Marilyn Monroe, Joe DiMaggio, and Senator Joseph McCarthy of 1950's communist witch hunt infamy, in the fictional 'Insignificance' (1985). Einstein is also clearly implied in the classic scifi movie 'The Day the Earth Stood Still' (1951). And Einstein and Marie Curie appear by name in a silly Australian teen comedy which is more about beer than physics, 'Young Einstein' (1989). A newer Einstein fiction, 'I.Q.' (1994), has him playing matchmaker for his niece. He seems to be averaging one movie every five years.

There are a fair number of realistic stories about fictional scientists or other intellectuals, such as 'No Highway in the Sky' (1951) in which James Stewart plays an aviation engineer who is

certain that the plane he's on should not fly. His heroic act is to pull the landing gear control at a stopover, crippling the plane so it can't fly again. His heroism saves the life of fellow passenger Marlene Dietrich, and he wins the heart of Glynis Johns. Later on, in his aircraft test laboratory the suspect part of the plane breaks as he predicted. Stewart clearly brought the Promethean boon of knowledge to society.

A notable exception to most categories is the 1952 comedy 'The Man in the White Suit', starring Alec Guinness as a chemist who discovers a fabric which will not get dirty. Everybody is trying to eliminate him and his formula, out of fear of the economic consequences. Textile factory managers are after him, as are the labor unions. He is saved in the end when the formula only turns out to be temporary. This is a reversal of the myth of Prometheus, where the hero is saved by the failure of his boon. This otherwise realistic movie could be considered science fiction, out of the social satire brand from the 1950s.

There are other heroes of at least high intellectual distinction if not scientific achievement. 'Goodbye Mr. Chips' (1939) is a classic film about an English schoolmaster who is a Latin classicist. It was remade as a musical in 1969, and in 1962 it inspired an episode of 'The Twilight Zone' written by Rod Serling. There are more than twenty such realistic movies, but not that many more compared to 20,000. Perhaps the numbers would be greater if I included computer programmers in the count. There do not seem to be any movies about the real inventors of computers or

programming languages, though.

The public apparently likes its heroes of science either totally fantastic or totally realistic: that is, either in science fiction or in documentaries. A listing of either of those categories would number in the thousands, and rival the mainstream movie guidebooks. Why? For documentaries, we have the appeal of pure education, something for the smarties, although the principles of storytelling may also apply here, too. For scifi movies, we are back to John W. Campbell's observation on the contents of libraries consisting of mankind's ideals. Our heroes of science must strive after our ideals, and the public prefers those ideals to be future accomplishments.

Let us turn to the genre of sense of wonder, when all accomplishments are either in the future, or discoveries which would transform the future. Some accomplishments might not be good things, and the 1950s were full of grade B movies about alien invaders and monsters whose wonders composed only threats. The heroes of these tales often destroyed the new science, and brought no boon to their society except a secure status quo. In the age of anxiety about possible atomic war with communist nations, these tales were popular. Let us instead look at the high points of optimism, which give a complete working of the archetypal forces of imaginary heroes.

STAR WARS

You could say that George Lucas, the creator of the Star Wars

movies, is in relation to Sigmund Freud as Alexander the Great was in relation to Socrates. This historical syllogism follows from a chain of four men. Socrates' student was Plato, and Plato's student was Aristotle. For a time, Aristotle taught Alexander the Great, who conquered a lot of the world. Similarly, Freud's student was Jung, and Jung's student, at least in the literary sense, was Joseph Campbell. Lucas openly acknowledges that Campbell's book The Hero with a Thousand Faces was the guiding influence for 'Star Wars' (1977), and with that Lucas went on to conquer most of the movie world.(2)

The story of Luke Skywalker, the young hero of 'Star Wars', illustrates how the standard screenplay formula easily fits the story of the Hero. Joseph Campbell's Hero cycle, detailed in the previous chapter, consists of a separation, initiation, and return. The inciting incident of the screenplay functions as the separation. In 'Star Wars', Luke's parents are killed and he receives a message from Princess Leia asking for help from the Jedi master Obi Wan Kenobi. The progressive complications comprise the adventure of initiation. In 'Star Wars', this consists of most of the movie, in which Luke finds Obi Wan Kenobi, joins with Han Solo, rescues the Princess, and attacks the Death Star, a super weapon in outer space.

The crisis decision still occurs as part of the initiatory adventure, the logical climax. A standard crisis decision for the mythical Hero is to make a sacrifice, but Luke does not make that in 'Star Wars'. Rather, the crisis is in how he tries to blow up

the Death Star. Racing along in his little spaceship, he finds that his equipment may not be adequate to the bombing run. The spirit of Obi Wan Kenobi tells him to trust his feelings and put aside his machinery, to "Use the Force" in reference to spirit power. Luke decides to follow the advice, and succeeds in blowing up the Death Star.

The obligatory scene of the exploding Death Star demonstrates the boon that Luke has achieved. With the loss of that weapon, the evil Empire will presumably not take over the rest of the universe. The resolution of the story follows the hero's return, in which Luke and Han Solo are given awards by the Princess at a ceremony. In proper form for an action movie, the tale ends quickly thereafter.

Now, the greatest heroism of Luke Skywalker is in his development of his spirit power, "The Force". In his PBS TV series, Joseph Campbell remarks on Luke's crisis decision as an example of human spirit mastering the machine. Campbell found the 'Star Wars' movies as complete expressions of the Hero mythos, including the sequels where Luke encounters more adventures and a second mentor after Obi Wan Kenobi's death in the first movie.

Campbell also explicated the villain's role in the movie. Fitting the Hero's quest of atonement with the father, the villain is Darth Vader, or "Dark Father" in pseudo-German. Darth Vader is the man who has lost his soul to the machinery of the world, to activities outside the family. Luke and his long-lost father have their atonement at the end of the third movie. At the end of the

second movie, Darth Vader told Luke he was his father, whereas Luke had believed that he was the person who had killed his father. He had killed himself symbolically, because he had been subverted by "the dark side of The Force". Darth Vader wears an all-black costume, fitting one who has gone over to the dark side, and also indicating his function as a Shadow archetype. He is evil and an unknown identity wearing a mask. When the atonement occurs, the mask comes off.

I must confess that there were times when I first saw the three Star Wars movies when it seemed incredibly corny to me. I did not know of Joseph Campbell then, and the twists in the story seemed straight out of stereotypes of the worst melodrama of the early movies. Princess Leia telling Luke that she was his sister reminded me of every grade schooler's parody of bad movies on the playground. This was in my childhood, when girls and boys played with imaginary guns instead of real ones. One boy would get shot, somebody would shoot the killer unexpectedly and proclaim "He was my brother!" That was a third-grader's idea of sophisticated satire of TV and movies.

I never read any recognition of Lucas's mythical story structure in the science fiction magazines once the movies came out, until Spinrad's 1992 article. Most scifi writers seemed to totally miss the point, nor was there mention of it in the SFWA-SFRA anthology published in 1978 and devoted to mythology. The writers loved or hated 'Star Wars' depending on their attitude to corny scifi serials of the 1930s and 1940s. One called it

"gloriously dumb".

The Star Wars movies certainly do continue the action movie tradition of how heroes use science and technology. Typically, they use technology for weapons or travel. In tales of old when knights rode on horseback, the sword and steed were the hero's instruments. In science fiction movies, the ray gun and rocket ship have taken their place. In most other action movies, the gun and car are the typical intrusion of technology into the hero's life. For all his mythical subtlety, George Lucas did not give the world any new perspective on the use of science or technology. He gave us more war, the same thing only bigger and better. It was fitting when Senator Ted Kennedy used "Star Wars" as a putdown of Ronald Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative space weapons program, so fitting that the name stuck. In 1977, anxiety about atomic war was still possible, so the 1950s UFO with the A-bomb became the Death Star.

STAR TREK

Let us turn now to television, and the scifi phenomenon which is bigger than Star Wars: Star Trek. It has had an exhibition at the Smithsonian Museum in Washington, D.C. in 1992. There have been other museum exhibitions, such as the 'Star Trek: Federation Science' exhibit at the California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park in 1994. Ronald Reagan named the first space shuttle the Enterprise, after the Star Trek ship.

'Star Wars' may have made movie history, but Star Trek goes beyond

that.

A majority of the American public claim to be Trekkies, even though they won't partake of the subculture which goes to Star Trek conventions. There must surely be some mythic, archetypal forces at work here for this TV show to have become part of the American identity.

Star Trek is a topic which has been written about in academic books and journals, from various perspectives. For example, Regina Sackmary has commented in passing on the threesome of Kirk, McCoy, and Spock.⁽³⁾ She finds that it fits scifi writer Theodore Sturgeon's principles of human closeness and the importance of overcoming isolation and loneliness. This is another part of the show's appeal besides its sense of wonder at the exploration of new worlds.

There is something about that threesome which is Freudian. The super smart Mr. Spock can represent the Superego. Likewise, the wildly emotional Dr. McCoy speaks for the Id. And the balancing force between these two contenders, the Ego, is Captain Kirk. This is a winning formula for dramatic character interactions. There is the permanent potential for conflict between the three, especially between McCoy and Spock, who endlessly debate the value of human emotions over cold logic. A part of the show's appeal was the humorous bickering between these two characters, with McCoy goading Spock into some response of barely repressed emotions. Spock is half human and half Vulcan, so he is torn by inner conflict to have his human emotions controlled by his Vulcan culture of logic. His

alien heritage is indicated by his pointed ears and eyebrows, besides his acting cool and reserved.

An interesting appearance of this Freudian trio occurred in Andrei Tarkovsky's movie 'Stalker' (1979, English translation video 1993). It is an interesting coincidence that the title of this movie sounds like Star Trek, even in Russian. Although a science fiction movie, there is no futuristic technology in this tale of the present. There is stunning cinematography of nature and ruins, evoking a sense of wonder nevertheless.

A zone in Russia has been abandoned and sealed off by the military because a strange meteorite has landed and is warping the laws of nature there. A special room in the zone is reputed to give visitors anything they desire. An illegal guide for clandestine visitors, the Stalker, functions as the Ego. He brings in two visitors: the Writer and the Professor. The writer is an insubordinate, womanizing alcoholic, serving as the Id. The Professor is the Superego, and the two men spend the entire trip arguing about the meaning of life, and science versus art. Their argument is also a direct expression of C.P. Snow's "two cultures" debate (see Chapter 2). The Professor possesses a form of super strength (Spock has natural super strength) because he retrieves a small atomic bomb intended to destroy the magic room. The movie's message resolves as an antinuclear statement and an endorsement of family values. The Professor decides to disassemble the bomb and toss its parts into the room - thus the greatest wish is for nuclear disarmament. The Stalker reunites with his wife and

daughter, and decides to make a life with them. And the influence of technology and science does not quit there, however. The movie ends with the revelation that Stalker's mutant daughter has telekinetic psi powers. The future is very much open to question.

Stalker went on an adventure into a fantastic land and returned with an unexpected boon, thus fulfilling a Hero's quest. This can also happen in Star Trek. Spock turned into the series' most popular character, and he was also developed into the most complete Hero cycle in the series of movies which followed in the 1980s. And he made full use of science and technology to do so.

Spock made a heroic sacrifice to save the Enterprise in the second movie, 'Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan' (1982). The engine room was flooded with deadly radiation, but Spock went in to repair some equipment. He dies, and his corpse is ejected into space, in a casket that lands on a newly-formed planet. End of second movie.

In 'Star Trek III: The Search for Spock' (1984) the Enterprise returns to the new planet to discover that Spock has been reborn, due to the special energies of the planet. The planet is a product of the scientific research of Captain Kirk's son, so Spock is rejuvenated in a veritable Garden of Eden, but by way of the biotechnology lab. There are more sacrifices to come. Captain Kirk's son is subsequently killed on the planet, the planet is unstable and blows up, and the Enterprise is destroyed. Spock, Kirk, McCoy and the other regulars from the TV series depart in a Klingon ship. End of third movie.

In 'Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home' (1986) the crew in their

Klingon ship return to Earth. This is the humorous movie in the series, as they travel back in time to 1980s San Francisco to kidnap two whales. They bring the whales back to their own time, in the Klingon ship, and save the Earth from an alien space probe which will destroy the world unless it can communicate via whale song. The problem was that whales were extinct in the future. But now the Hero cycle is complete, with a sacrifice (separation), rebirth (initiation), and return with a boon for humanity.

This fourth movie used the theme of the super powerful alien space probe which formed the story of the first movie, 'Star Trek - The Motion Picture' (1979). Spock went on a mini-Hero cycle in that movie, for he confronted a different alien probe which threatened to destroy the world. Alone in a spacesuit, he crossed the probe's threshold. He then proceeded to go on a cosmic mind trip extremely similar to the famous scene in '2001: A Space Odyssey' (1968). From this he learned the secrets of the universe, and found all of them wanting compared to the warmth of human closeness. He returned to the Enterprise with his boon: he grasped Kirk's hand as he lay on a sick bed, and expounded on the value of human friendship. He also had a lot of technical information about the alien ship and the Federation woman it had taken over.

This first movie was more explicitly Jungian, with a greater heroic sacrifice by a "guest star". The climax of the movie is a technological portrayal of the Anima and Animus, as the guest star and the possessed woman, lovers in the distant past, merge into a being of light. The alien probe's hunger to know and experience

humanity is satisfied, and it evolves onto a higher plane of reality, thereby vanishing from normal space. End of story, and a fine tale of wonder in one movie's length. Sadly, most fans of Star Trek like this movie less than the others which are more action-oriented.

The weekly TV series 'Star Trek, the Next Generation' has carried the tradition of the show, followed by 'Star Trek, Deep Space Nine' and the new series 'Star Trek, Voyager'. However, there is something lacking in all post-Spock versions of Star Trek. That petty bickering of McCoy and Spock just hasn't been duplicated, nor has any clearly Freudian character triad. The new universe seems less exciting than the original show, but perhaps it's my age. I even find the original show more futuristic-looking than the later ones. The cheap sets still look exotic, with props doing things that look impossible, thus the technology looks wondrous. By contrast, the contemporary shows do not look futuristic at all. They look contemporary, with the latest touch-panel computer control screens instead of buttons and knobs. I dare say that the buttons will win in the real future. At least, I hope so, based upon how Star Trek has inspired me.

REIFICATION VERSUS REALITY

One more famous scifi movie merits attention as the embodiment of the concept of reification: 'Forbidden Planet' (1956). This is one of the best of the lot, arguably a model for Star Trek and certainly the most explicitly Freudian scifi movie of all time.

It is also an overt reworking of Shakespeare's masterpiece The Tempest. An old scientist, Morbius, lives on a planet with his beautiful, nubile daughter Altaira. They are served by a wondrous robot, Robby. So far, we have Shakespeare's wizard Prospero, daughter Miranda, and the spirit Ariel, living on an island. A military craft of the interstellar federation arrives, and a romance ensues between the ship's captain, Commander Adams, and the daughter. We are now up to the romance between Miranda and the shipwrecked Ferdinand. The equivalent of Shakespeare's monster Caliban then intervenes, in the form of a mysterious invisible force that starts killing the visitors. The force is discovered to be a monster composed of energy, created by the technology of an extinct alien race. Morbius has been researching the alien technology, including a headset that materializes contents of the mind.

As the monster is about to destroy them, Morbius realizes the mistake he has made. The ship's doctor, dieing from his own use of the headset, announced the cause: "Monsters from the Id!" The alien artifact has reached into the unconscious mind of Morbius and activated his resentment at his daughter's attraction to the spacemen. Morbius renounces his fury, and as he collapses and dies the monster vanishes, saving his daughter and the captain. In Shakespeare's play, Prospero more willingly renounced his powers and was happy to marry off his daughter. But The Tempest was more of a comment on human society, with its different social levels and crimes and ambitions and loves. It was one of Shakespeare's last

plays, and his summing up of the world as he saw it. The point of 'Forbidden Planet' was the marriage of powerful technology to the desires of the human mind, with its unconscious dangers.

And the problem posed by the technology in the movie was precisely the reification of mental forces. In a sense, any entertainment is reification, since things in the human mind come into the outer world: art, music, dance, drama. Psychologists interpret any entertainment as driven by deeper motives, whether Freudian or not. When dealing with science, the issue becomes a question of the foundation of modern reality. What kind of reality is imagined and presented to an audience as something to strive for? The subtle points of human relationships and the Hero's goal may get lost in the wonder of it all.

Fans of scifi movies are criticized for liking anything that has space ships in it, and not caring if the society portrayed is a militaristic nightmare inimical to democracy. This takes us back to the "emperor of everything" analysis in the prior chapter, in which the hero's achievement of power goes too far and rides over the society he is supposed to protect. Looking at the Trekkie fans who wish to live on a regimented Star Fleet ship, one can recall that some people really are cut out for the military lifestyle, and soldiering is the perfect heroic play for boys if not girls. People also play at cops and robbers, and cowboys and Indians. But these are not guides to growing up, and a full heroic tale should bring in something for that.

There is a more common danger of reification, which any movie

or any dramatic entertainment presents, and we may consider this as the dramatic video fallacy. This is another corollary of the entertainment fallacy. Here the problem is: if it's people moving and talking on a screen it must be realistic. Actors and directors devote their lives to the opposite of that belief, i.e. trying to make performances believable, but they're professionals with discriminating tastes - presumably. Audiences are not so discriminating. We have critics for the express purpose of disabusing audiences of this fallacy, but the forces at work are far more powerful than critics. There is a kind of natural inclination to view acting as realistic. Even watching theater of the absurd, one can quickly adopt the "willing suspension of disbelief" and empathize with characters in impossibly silly situations.

This natural inclination may be the origin of myth and story, for cavemen needed to immediately assume that someone wearing a buffalo skin and dancing around the campfire was a buffalo, for the sake of the evening's entertainment. Nowadays, directors and actors devote their lives to making distinctions between good and bad performances, as the audience has grown more discriminating in their perceptions (Rabiger does address this). And screenwriters devote their lives to telling stories with believable sequences of events and human reactions which reveal believable characters. But even with modern sophisticated audiences, the pull of the inevitable assumption is always there. The old sarcastic saying of "If it's in print, then it's got to be true" now applies as "If

it's on screen, then it must be true". Thinking in imagery is a more fundamental process than what is called critical thinking. This is part of the associational powers of the human imagination.

Literary scholars actually do have a traditional name for a similar process, called the pathetic fallacy. By this they mean the ascribing of human feelings or character to inanimate nature, such as in the phrases "stubborn door" or "angry sea". How much easier than the pathetic fallacy it is to indulge in the video fallacy or the heroic fallacy or any entertainment fallacy. You merely ascribe realism to the actions of human characters or performers.

Of course, any mental concept must be acted out in real life and behavior for it to be communicated to another person, so one could doubt that fine distinctions of realism have much utility. But there is an important difference between knowing the symbolical meaning of an act and being fixated on the symbol as the end-all of meaning. For example, initiation into mythic power is to enable joining society, not to become the emperor of everything. But so much of entertainment and religion is reification instead of deeper meaning.

Joseph Campbell quotes Carl Jung on the natural inclination to reify symbols, in The Hero With a Thousand Faces. Jung pointed out that it is incomparably useful for dogmatic symbols to prevent direct experience of God or entry of living godhead into the space of a church. Campbell then notes that the Hero is trying to keep the spiritual forces away when he flees back to the normal world

with his boon. To this end, the Hero may toss his magic aids behind him to delay the pursuing spirits. So reification keeps the realm of ultimate meaning separate from daily life, to prevent reality from being overwhelmed. The best that can be brought back is a boon, perhaps, such as useful technology. Or other useful things such as a saved person may be brought back, or simply knowledge. For youth, the most useful thing is knowledge to enable initiation into adulthood.

It is easy for the crisis decision point of a show to fit the needs of the transition from youth to adulthood. This is the point mentioned in the previous section on dramatic structure, and what is typically the climax of a story. Note that the climax of initiation is also the attainment of adulthood, as covered in the first chapter. We can bring in Orson Scott Card's character analysis from the scifi chapter, and desire the cinematic climax of a story to mark the transition from youthful irresponsibility to committed adulthood. That is, the crisis is one of commitment, and the decision that defines the character is to assume responsibility in an ongoing adult way. This is something that requires people to be committed to, and thus it falls easily within the realm of movies and TV, where emotional relationships are the glue and substance of the story.

What then becomes of science and technology when the heroic task is to adopt social responsibilities? It is instrumental to look at the opening quotation for this chapter. I find it to be one of the funniest lines from a movie I've ever heard. Its

extremity never fails to make me laugh, and it was not intended to be funny. It's a story about people living in Alaska; not science fiction. For all that scene's absurdity, it is probably the most fundamental statement of the meaning of life contained in this entire book. We live and die and try to raise the next generation from birth through childhood. That's it. Science would endorse that as evolution.

Where is technology in that scene? It is there: it's the telephone that brought the melodramatic message to Jim Backus (the voice of Mr. Magoo, also Mr. Howell on Gilligan's Island). Technology is the servant of man, and the needs to fulfill are the same timeless social occupations which go back to the caves. Prometheus's flame is a tool to build civilization, but the dramas in civilization could occur around a campfire. If the heroic instincts are inherited by Jungian mechanisms, then of course the evolved traits satisfy needs from the dawn of human time. The need is not science and technology. The need is survival. The means to that end is knowledge and tools.

Herein we see the dangers of reification within the entertainment fallacy. The need for worship could make a sacred object of the technology itself. How easy that is when the dramatic video presents pyrotechnics to stoke the flames of video fallacy. There is a greater danger here than the mere worship of boons instead of social knowledge and growing up, however. There is a danger which relates standard dramatic principles to the heroic fallacy.

As heroes use violence, drama uses conflict as much as possible. If at all possible, characters argue, bicker, engage in wit, spar, anything but the usual uses of conversation. What model of social interaction does this present? An intensely disturbed and agitated state of relations; not what anyone would want to be around for any great length of time. When such conflict served a ritual of mythic initiation, the story ended and there was a clear return to normalcy. But movies and TV partake of the dramatic video fallacy: the agitated environment is portrayed as reality. The fantastic powers of the spirit realm are seeping into the quotidian world, and the godhead is destroying the church. This reaches its peak in the expression of violence as modeled in entertainment, bringing us back to the issue of how influential media violence is.

Admittedly, a fun story with a violent ending can be cathartic. This is the most common reason for action movies and TV shows, and the goal is the opposite of social modeling. The pop psychologist David Viscott explains in passing the ameliorative function of such action movies in his book The Language of Feelings.⁽⁴⁾ He notes that most of the anxieties of daily life are diffuse and not easily resolved. How restful, then, to see a show wherein the problem is clearly resolved, and a clear villain is soundly beaten. Basic survival instincts can be aroused and completely satisfied after a thrilling vicarious adventure. It's a mini-vacation of the mind.

As an illustration, that ending scene in 'Casablanca' is

notable for its classic fictional ending which ties up things neatly: the hero shoots the Nazi, and the endangered people fly away to safety. As for technology, a gun and an airplane solved the situation which was threatened by Nazis using cars, guns, and a telephone. But the imaginary point here is the use of violence to solve problems, and its reflection in reality.

There are two opposing camps on the issue of media violence. The "modeling" camp consists of the critics such as parents and educators who decry the portrayal of violence. The "catharsis" camp consists of those in the entertainment industry who make money from the spectacle of violence.⁽⁵⁾ What each camp fails to see is that they are both right. Any fun, cathartic, violent entertainment carries the dramatic video fallacy that it may be useful in reality. The archetypes of initiation have been derailed to no meaningful symbolism. When the meaning is sufficiently perverted to make the boon a thing of worship, and that boon is a gun, weak minds may interpret the story literally and resort to deadly violence.

There is also a behavioristic, operant conditioning effect at work in movies and TV which I have noticed. Many years ago on some TV show, I once saw a screenwriter partially remark upon this. He noted that an easy way to arouse an audience is with something sexy, but most times the arousal can't be satisfied by continuing the erotic direction. The writer is telling a story for mainstream movie houses or broadcast TV, and restraint is called for. But the socially acceptable way to release that erotic tension in the story

is to interject some violence. What this screenwriter didn't say was that this technique of storytelling is tantamount to rewarding sexual arousal with violence.(6)

Watch any mainstream movie or TV show that includes violence, and I dare say that you can verify the following rule: any time sexuality is indicated, violence will follow within five minutes. It may be in a different scene, and completely unrelated to the sexy characters, but it follows in time. I have never noticed an exception to this, nor have I ever heard anyone mention it in spite of the furious public debate about media violence. There is an outrage here beyond the mere conditioning of violence. There is an association of violence with sex: not just sex and violence, but violence as the punishment or reward for sexuality.

Movies have been called the ultimate vicarious experience, for they work as a dynamic, visual engagement of feelings. When archetypal forces of violence are expressing themselves in mythic story patterns, there is danger in combining that into the ultimate entertainment media. The imaginary heroes in the scientific age might lose their mythic footing and stray too far into reality before they are supposed to. Perhaps the more fantastic and impossible the tale, the safer the audience is from the influence of modeling and operant conditioning to derive sexual satisfaction from violence.

There is no denying the power or influence of moving pictures over and above other media. Michael Rabiger concluded his cinema textbook's introduction by stating that "One day it may even be

able to justify robbing literature of its fans." Taking an optimistic view, science fiction magazine editor Kristine Kathryn Rusch holds that scifi movies and TV will promote literacy via novelization tie-ins.⁽⁷⁾ But let us now leave the realm of the aliterate and reenter the literate realm - in the land of comic books.

CHAPTER FOUR: COMIC BOOKS

"And so, in mythological terms what is to happen now? All of our old gods are dead, and the new have not yet been born."

Joseph Campbell, The Inner Reaches of Outer Space

The immediately interesting thing about comic book superheroes is that they most resemble the original heroes of mankind's myths. They have supernatural powers and they battle supernatural foes, to achieve super goals. Their powers are not necessarily supernatural in the sense of deriving from the spirit realm, for often they come from pseudoscientific explanations. For example, Superman is an alien from another planet where his body has a genetic heritage to be super strong by Earth's standards.

But there is one genre in comics which is literally identical to the heroic myths, just as it is a cousin to science fiction literature: sword and sorcery, or fantasy comic books. There are quite a lot of them, but as with my remarks in the scifi chapter, they don't apply to my theme of using science. But if you want to see the old myths exactly as they were told around the hearth or

campfire, you can still buy those comics.

Those are the traditional heroes, the Conan/Beowulfs. There are also crossover heroes who have clear mythical origins but exist in a modern world alongside their technological cohorts. The two most obvious examples are Thor and Wonder Woman. Thor is Marvel's version of the Norse god of thunder, complete with Asgard, home of the gods, and a pantheon of supporting characters who have the other historical names: Odin, Loki, Balder, Heimdall, etc. Wonder Woman is DC's third most famous character, who started in 1941 and continues today. She was created by a male psychologist who had feminist sympathies. She is the daughter of Queen Hippolyte, from the race of Greek Amazons of the hidden Paradise Island. Wonder Woman came to the world of mankind to help the Allies in World War II, and also help make the world into a place without war or other stupid activities of men. She inspires girls to be all they can be.

The modern heroes are the Superman and Batman and Green Lanterns. And they join their modern groups of technological heroes: the Justice League, the Green Lantern Corps, and even 10,000 years in the future, the Legion of Superheroes. I'll use these particular heroes and groups as examples, based on my recent reading of them in the past few years. First, to set the stage.

As for entertainment subcultures, comic books serve as the center of these as much as science fiction or movies or TV shows. There are fan conventions, some totally devoted to the Legion of Super Heroes alone. There are fan publications, or fanzines, just

like with scifi. Similarly, there are professional and amateur journals for adults to contribute to besides the kidstuff which may comprise fanzines. The most prominent ones that I draw upon here are The Comics Journal, Amazing Heroes, and Comics Interview. There was also a boom in "independent" comics in the 1980s, which means comics not published by Marvel or DC.

Marvel is the top publisher while DC is a distant second, but DC has the advantage of holding the cultural icons which are known worldwide and through history: Superman, Batman, and Wonder Woman. This gives DC more of an image of all-American wholesomeness, having heroes who are assumed to do good deeds instead of just engage in gratuitous violence for adolescent male power fantasies. As an adult in my late 30s, I've been drawn to these icons of tradition. But as one who grew up on comic books, I have kept in touch with the rest of the field, too.

COMIC BOOKS AND LITERACY

I had a most unexpected experience at the American Library Association convention in San Francisco in 1992. I had my picture taken with Spiderman. Now, the ALA and libraries are not particularly known for any interest in comic books. The ALA does have a popular culture interest group of a couple dozen librarians, a few of which are interested in comics. I know because I attended their meeting at the 1993 ALA convention in Los Angeles. That's not a lot out of 151,554 librarians and 118,385 libraries in this country, by the ALA's count.

Nevertheless, there was a Marvel Comics booth at the 1992 ALA convention, and a guy in a Spiderman suit autographing free comics and posing for photos with willing people like me. Marvel was certainly doing a bold move, although the comics industry has touted literacy as one of its benefits for years. In fact, many comic creators have helped charitable causes promoting literacy. In 1986, Cartoonists Across America was founded, for members to tour U.S. cities raising charity funds. The ALA was aware of this, and endorsed the tour. Benefit comic books have also been created by accomplished artists and writers.

You can find random editorials on the subject of literacy in various comics from Marvel or DC, and I quite agree with them: comics can foster literacy, if they're the kind with lots of words in them. Starting in the 1980s, comics took a trend towards bigger pictures, more violence and less words, but there are still many "titles" with lots of writing and words to read. The "Death of Superman" series in 1992-3 was praised by industry members for returning some literacy to the business, as it had a storyline requiring reading over several issues. But that's DC, and we're looking at Marvel.

Most American males have probably experienced adult disapproval of their reading comics: "violent trash" could be a typical disparagement. One would expect a librarian to be a pillar of support for that attitude, wanting the kids to get into books. But there was Marvel, selling librarians on the idea of comics as reading. The booth did not seem well attended by the librarians,

but they did stop by and take all of the free comics. The salesmen were continually restocking the comics rack. Perhaps this was an experiment on Marvel's part. I did not see a Marvel comics booth at the 1988 ALA convention in San Francisco, or the 1993 convention in L.A.

Speaking of the trend away from words in comics, Isaac Asimov mentioned that as a general trend in entertainment in the 20th century. In his memoirs, he fondly recalled growing up in the 1920s and 1930s when the only "junk food for the mind" was in the pulp magazines. He saw the first step away from that as comic books, followed by picture magazines and TV. This makes a bad trend in American society, in which printed words are progressively replaced by pictures. He nostalgically recalled the pulps as teaching a generation of boys to read as they pursued junk stories. I suppose the modern equivalent of that lament is one recalling comic books before the nonverbal trend of the 1980s.

The modern authority on comics, Scott McCloud, refers to the adult belief that as you grow up you learn to read all words instead of all pictures or combinations of both. By far the best explication of the visual aspects of comic books is the new book by Scott McCloud, Understanding Comics. He touches on storytelling from the viewpoint of artistic mechanics, but his analysis seldom overlaps with the subjects I'm concerned with. I'm into story, he's into art. Indeed, I remember one of my adult role models, a librarian, once saying to me "When are you going to learn to read words, Mike?" Well, I've learned to read words, and like many

adult males I've renewed my love of comics. There's something more here than just junk food for the mind, Asimov and librarians aside.

The most serious challenge to comic books on the literacy front came from Dr. Fredric Wertham in the 1950s, and it has been recently revived and expanded by Ronald Schmitt (q.v.). In 1954, Wertham's book Seduction of the Innocent claimed that reading comics was an evasion of reading and its opposite, instead of a primitive stage of early literacy. Wertham dealt more with social issues of crime comics and juvenile delinquency. Schmitt, published in 1992, focusses on comics as a deconstructed form of literacy, with visual and print literacy in conflict. He sees this as part of a new media assault which could overturn the educational process which relies on print. This literacy of comics is exactly what McCloud spends an entire illustrated book explaining, without alarm.

Schmitt is alarmed. This follows from his primary valuation of written text as the best medium for ideas, information, and intelligence. I share this value, but I do not share his alarm. The deconstruction he cites is not necessarily an impediment to the development of plain print literacy. He notes that one cannot read words and pictures at the same time, whereas when watching TV one can hear words and follow pictures at the same time. He does not note that when one is reading, one can see pictures at the same time in one's mind, or hear the words at the same time in imagination. These abilities vary among people, but they're part of the multi-sensory aspect of reading, and any sense could be activated for

this: smell, touch, taste, feelings. In the reader's mind, shifts from text to image are occurring continually. The difference with comics is that the imagery is on paper, outside of the mind.

In other words, less mental effort is required to generate the pictures. This was remarked on at the start of the chapter on movies and TV, as the obvious mass appeal of those forms. Schmitt sees the comics medium as a transitional step towards TV. In a sense, comics stand as a transitional medium to more intensive mental effort, away from the totally passive moving pictures. Just like reading print, a comics reader fills in the gaps between frames, making the characters move and talk in his imagination. The printed artwork stands alone or it can serve to inspire mental imagery.

One can get a sense of this by watching that medium which is a step between comics and TV with live people: animated cartoons. Then try reading a comic book: you will find it takes more work. Of course, any electronic media can lead to mental fatigue, just from the unnatural pace and continual whirlwind of sound. I find this form of fatigue more a kind of annoyance than exhaustion.

Rather than deconstruction, this makes comics a force for construction, and the ALA recognizes this when it endorses those in the comics business who help literacy campaigns. Like technology, comics are a two-way street that can lead to destruction or good things.

ARCHETYPAL VOICES PROPHECYING WAR

Comic books are very violent, most of them. Even the stuff aimed at little kids can have Mickey Mouse and other cutesy animals doing violent things. To little kids, this is fun, and there are not any particular archetypal needs or drives which are being met by escaping into the cartoon world. It's entertainment, involving powerful forces which grab the kids' imaginations - violent forces like cars and airplanes, not violent forces like Tricksters or Shadows. The preponderance of comic entertainers of little kids may be tricksters, but not because little kids have a need for that. It's because that's all that little kids understand. The Trickster's appeal to older kids is due to their adolescent cynicism and resistance against responsibility, but to the little ones he's just a clown.

I accordingly restrict my analysis to adolescent youth or adults who read comics, those who recognize heroes as heroes and feel some pull towards deriving social meaning out of the heroes' adventures. Between the little ones who laugh at clowns and the adolescent rebels there is also an age range I will ignore, namely the children whose first form of morality is taken uncritically from adults, and who may thrill to heroes smashing villains but in an uncritical way. What I say may or may not apply to this age group. So, on to the storms of youth.

There is a significant difference between most superhero comic books and most science fiction literature. In scifi, the hero will find a technological boon which changes the world. That seldom

happens in comics. Rather, the attainment of superhero status is the boon, and the hero benefits society as a crimefighter or defender against other superpowered opponents. Superheroes often find technical wonders which would change the world if they were mass manufactured and used in society, but the wonders remain restricted to the special use of groups of superheroes or semi-secret government agencies which help battle supervillains.

This makes comics personally oriented in a way that scifi isn't, but it also gives them an edge in the realism department. While a scifi future is essentially totally fantastic, the usual world of a superhero comic is only half fantastic, the other half being the real world. Of course, there are totally science fictional comics, and Marvel and DC have both developed their "universes" into science fiction cosmologies, going back to the origin of time. But the stories still happen in the present, in a world which seldom pays attention to super-powered people. Even if fleets of aliens invade and take over the world, in a few months it's back to the daily grind for mankind. Nobody adapts flying saucers to replace automobiles in the daily commute to work.

A most noteworthy exception to this general rule is the DC series 'Watchmen' by Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons. It is a self-contained series in which a genius, Ozymandias, does change the world with his inventions. He gives the world electric cars and helium airships to solve pollution, transportation and energy crises, but it isn't enough. To stop a nuclear war between the US and Soviet Union, he becomes a villain and destroys New York City.

This series from 1986-1987 is available as a trade paperback, and it is justly recognized as the best mainstream comic book series ever written for adults. It is an adult twisting of the archetypal heroes, with only one character actually a superhero with supernatural powers.

The closest approach to pure mythical archetypes comes from the "King of Comics", Jack Kirby (1917-1994). This is the man who drew the superheroes which made Marvel rich in the 1960s and onwards. Kirby started with Marvel in 1940, co-creating their most historic character, Captain America. In the 1970s, he created a "fourth world" for DC, which is pure mythology out of Joseph Campbell. In remarking on his fourth world he said, "I felt that we ourselves were without a mythology ... and I thought that there was a new mythology needed for our times." This could be a direct answer to Campbell's quote at the start of this chapter. However, his new mythos did not take at DC, and the various titles died out.

The characters remained, with the most lasting contribution being the supreme villain Darkseid. This is Darth Vader a few years before George Lucas filmed him, and comics fans speculate on possible plagiarism. Actually, Darkseid is far more powerful than any Star Wars character. He rules the planet of Apokolips. The good guys in this mythos are called the New Gods. They engage in a timeless war with the bad guys of Apokolips. The main hero is Orion, who is Darkseid's estranged son. Unlike Luke Skywalker and Darth Vader, Orion will never achieve an atonement with his father of any lasting resolution since Darkseid is evil. Darkseid is

called upon to save the universe at times, but he remains essentially evil. His final fate occurs 10,000 years in the future, when he does achieve an atonement with a super child in 'The Legion of Super Heroes', and goes off to a higher plane of existence.

The relationship between violence and archetypes has been previously written about in this book, but further observations now are relevant apropos of comic books. Jack Kirby portrays the New Gods at war, other groups make war on each other, and throughout the field superheroes punch and get hit by supervillains. This is all rather unrealistic, in that an entire genre of printed works shows people who regularly get punched and don't suffer brain damage or any other permanent bodily harm. Why so much portrayal of violence to adolescent youth?

We have only to look at the archetypal needs of adolescence to find the answer. Of course comics deal with violence: that is a technique of stressing youths to bend their minds into the social rituals of initiation. Since our modern youth do not experience such realities any more, they experience them vicariously in their reading. And there is not a pernicious modeling of antisocial behavior involved when superheroes do this, because of their innate archetypal nature.

In standard myths, where does a hero commit violence? In the land of adventure, the fantastic other realm outside of normal society. This is part of the constructive social meaning of archetypal models, which modern society tries to erase in its

rational model of law and order, but which persists as part of human nature: there is a proper place for violence. In ancient times, it was on the hunt. In modern comics, it's on the hunt for criminals or supervillains. The mythic land is the place where violence is the correct thing to do, and anywhere a superhero is on the job becomes a mythic land for the duration of the fight. This fits in with why most of reality seems to ignore superheroes in the comic stories.

It also fits with the history and prehistory of real humanity. The hunting mentality can be thought of as a kind of "mythic time" when men access the archetypes of violence. Coming back to the hearth they would engage in entertainment to tell of their deeds, thus recalling when they were using their instinctive skills, i.e. accessing archetypes. The original boon that they brought back was the game that they killed. Of course, the women had the superior skill of producing a boon out of childbirth. Either sex has its own version of bloody violence in the mythic space-time.

This is somewhat of an answer to the heroic fallacy, as noted in the first chapter. Lewis Shiner asked how often in our daily lives do we get exposed to real violence, but there is a deeper issue of how often in our minds processes occur that would symbolize as violence. Comics indicate part of that answer. I recall an incident when I took an illustration course in San Francisco from the famous underground comic artist known as Spain. Two young boys got in some kind of shoving match in the back of the room, and he promptly stopped it by telling them, "If you want to

fight, do it in the comics!"

The main public opposition to comics in the 1950s, led by Dr. Fredric Wertham, concerned juvenile delinquency. As an aside, it is interesting to note that each subject of popular culture I have covered has been investigated by the federal government. As noted, federal agents investigated science fiction magazine stories in World War Two. And the movies and TV were notoriously witch-hunted by the McCarthy red scare of the 1950s. Comic books also had their day before the U.S. Congress, when Wertham's Seduction of the Innocent campaign had worked up concerns that crime comics were contributing to juvenile delinquents' criminality. The comic book industry responded to public concern by creating the Comics Code Authority, a censorship office which puts its stamps of approval in the upper corners of mainstream comic book covers. The size of the stamp, together with the CCA's power, has declined over the years.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the modeling versus catharsis dichotomy applies in comics, too. Modern groups opposed to TV violence also look at comic books with criticism.⁽¹⁾ Superhero comics seem to have a more natural protection from the censors than TV. The blatant fantasy blunts the charges of modeling, since imitation is usually impossible and approximation would be a far cry away. The crime comics are gone from the mainstream for the most part, and the real gangs of juvenile delinquents have long since equalled the worst of that extinct genre. The blame is obviously elsewhere, like maybe on TV.

The would-be censors of violence on TV probably give less

thought to sports. This is the usual mode for people to access the mythic space-time, far more popular than the pop cultures I consider in this book. The socially acceptable channeling of aggression and violent urges into competitive sports is no doubt completely satisfying for the participants. For some spectators, it's not completely satisfying, and they have to start fights or riot. For other spectators, it may be the equivalent of reading a comic book, with the added experience of getting to shout from the stands. Or in the TV room.

IDENTITY AND STORY CYCLES

One of the hallmarks of adolescence is the quest for identity, and this is reflected and magnified in superhero comic books. Adults may still enjoy the comics as entertainment, but that thrilling sense of wonder is muted in comparison to youth driven by need. The superheroes serve as guides in that quest for identity, as role models to emulate. The time of full-scale hero worship is the time of youth. Adults are supposed to outgrow the continual need for heroes to worship. Adults become the heroes in reality, and reference back to an imaginary hero can serve an occasional need for inspiration. Such needs may activate the mythic space-time frame of mind, or merely provide guidance by wondering "what would this Hero do in this situation?"

Youth who read comic books don't just hero-worship the superheroes. They become them in vicarious fantasy, and the connection to identity is highlighted by how most superheroes

start: they start as innocent youths who acquire superpowers and thus a new identity. Comics are full of brand new characters who are yelling at their adversaries or allies, "Don't just call me Joe anymore, call me __ (new name) __!" The acquisition of a new name is one of the first activities that any superhero does, and great care is put into it, similar to the care that a tribal society puts into its name-giving of its youth. Similar to a tribal society, the name may suddenly occur, even from a self-deprecating association, but it is appropriate.

The hostility with which the new superheroes proclaim their new names fits the antisocial mood of the uninitiated youth rather than the initiates, and this is an indicator of the characters' function in stories. Some heroes arrive at their new names with good feelings of virtue, and these are typically the ones who have been accepted into society. Superman and Batman are two examples who didn't acquire their names in rages, and they are pillars of the law enforcement community, if still outsiders. The angry young men and women who angrily proclaim their names, on the other hand, are often unaccepted outsiders. The good guys may be on the run from the law, and they still go on forms of identity quest, perhaps to discover their parents or more fully discover their powers.

The full discovery of identity is what happens on the mythological Hero cycle, as Joseph Campbell explained. We would expect that these self-discoveries of superpowers would take place within the context of a Hero's cycle of separation, adventure, and return. In comic books, the story has to be never-ending since

monthly continuity is desired with no end in sight. The complete Hero cycle still occurs, fitting Campbell's model, but it gets modified to lack resolution. As noted earlier, the boon does not transform society or transform the hero to fit into society. It transforms the hero to be able to have continuous adventures. One cycle of adventure ends, only to have a brief respite until the next adventure - next month.

One thing you can be sure of in any comics universe, and that is that change is a constant. But it may go in a familiar cycle, in fact too familiar. That is why I lost interest in Marvel comics as a teenager, when I first recognized it. It was the mid-1970s and the Fantastic Four was trapped in the negative zone, while Thor had troubles with Asgard under siege because Odin was asleep. The only trouble was, I had read these stories a few years earlier in the same titles. The feeling of disappointment was overwhelming. The sense of wonder had been replaced by boredom.

This was an example of "growing out of it", but it also indicates the attenuated nature of heroic entertainment trying to fulfill the sense of wonder when no initiation into reality is involved. There doesn't have to be damage, though (I got into ecology activism instead). As noted in Chapter One (note 3), the child psychiatrist Widzer related developmental stages to comic book superheroes, and found different heroes appealed to different stages.⁽²⁾ Superman appealed to a younger, "magical thinking" stage, whereas Batman appealed to a more "realistic" stage of childhood. As with science fiction literature, a story cycle

lasting only two or three years will last just as long as its audience does. Children grow out of one stage, and they can find a new hero to fit their next stage.

Since children do grow out of their stages, the story cycles of superhero comics could satisfy the initiation need, in the same manner that science fiction stories could. This was covered in Chapter Two, and there is evidence that comics mimic the same function that scifi does. This is found in the length of the story cycles, typically ranging from one to three years. Also, the transformation of normal people into superheroes mimics the bodily changes of children as they literally "grow up". Kids drastically change their bodily size and strength, and they look forward with eagerness to being bigger and powerful.

The violence of the story cycles in comics also reifies the world views of kids growing up. As children, we see our worlds crumble as we outgrow younger interests and toys. Or families move or homerooms in school change yearly. How appropriate that we see our heroes losing everything as their world collapses, perhaps from an alien invasion or assault of organized supervillains. Typically, everything breaks up in a story cycle: the organization of heroes dissolves or is threatened with collapse. The main hero may reform the group once it has been destroyed.

The superhero comics were not always this way, but they seem to be in an age of deliberate use of mythical models. From the 1940s to the 1960s, heroes like Superman would have isolated monthly adventures, with no lasting consequences for his own life

or the world. Marvel had success with expanding the stories across many issues, and the trend developed into deeper examinations of character and story complications. Characters nowadays are at least as fleshed out as in any movie, as the story editors guarantee.

I can provide a personal example of this. In 1993, I tried to write a story for the 'Green Lantern Corps Quarterly' comic book. It involved a woman in the corps with a yellow power ring. The corps consists of heroes who wear green power rings which are recharged from green lanterns. The corps is a galactic police force, inspired by a classic science fiction pulp series. Their power rings are clear examples of heroes using technology. The rings enable them to fly in outer space and make anything materialize from their imaginations. My heroine could do all that, but her ring was yellow. Novice that I was, my story was rejected. The editor (Kevin Dooley) was kind enough to compose a short, personal reply telling me what was lacking. By itself it was an education in writing.

The editor cited characterization problems: how does she feel about her yellow ring? What does the Green Lantern Corps mean to her, how much does she want to succeed in it? There were action and ending problems: she changed from a Green Lantern to a Yellow Lantern, but it was unclear if she learned anything or made any choices. The implications of his analysis matched the principles of dramatic conflict for screenwriting.

It's a small step from such detailed concerns of character to

sending the heroes on mythical adventures of archetypal significance. The Green Lantern Corps is a good example of this, since their recent history in the DC universe was a cycle of breakup and rebirth. As of 1994, they have been totally destroyed by a renegade Green Lantern, and their home planet has been blown up in an attempt to destroy that villain. It looks like they will never be back, BUT - we know that 10,000 years in the future, in 'The Legion of Super Heroes', there is at least one Green Lantern still left. And the corps was disbanded in 1988 when they killed a different renegade Green Lantern. They started reforming in 1992, providing two forms of three-year cycles from death to rebirth to death.

This mythic nature of story cycles has been recognized and used by both the writers of comic books and the scholars. There is in fact one book directly concerned with comic books as mythology: Super Heroes: A Modern Mythology, by Richard Reynolds, first published in 1992 in Britain and then in 1994 in the U.S. He provides extensive coverage of Thor, Superman, Batman, the Watchmen, and the X-Men. My analyses differ from his in many regards, but I would consider the differences complementary. For example, Joseph Campbell is cited at only one place in his text, while Carl Jung and archetypes are never mentioned. Freud is cited at one place, however, and the Oedipal conflict figures prominently. Reynolds has also derived a standard model for the Super Hero's story, similar to the efforts of Joseph Campbell or other scholars of myth. I am glad that I have discovered his book

as I am finishing mine, rather than earlier, or else I might not have put as much effort into my own ideas.

To finish up my analysis of comic books, we will now take a more direct look at some of the most famous superheroes, bringing in the point of view of other scholars as appropriate.

THE PLAYERS: SUPERMAN, BATMAN, AND THE REST

We should begin with Superman, of course. He started it all in 1938, the first superhero in a comic book. He even appears briefly in Carl Jung's popular book Man and His Symbols, as an example of the modern hero who rescues pretty girls and fights crime. This was only a caption on a picture, though. Various mythic analyses of Superman have been done, and they deserve passing mention.

Lang and Trimble (q.v.) found he epitomized the American monomyth, which focuses on redemption instead of initiation as the classical monomyth does. This uninitiated aspect of the old, pre-1986 Superman could account for his unfulfilled relations with women, which Michael Fleisher (q.v.) cites but blames on a neurotic need for rejection. Lester Roebuck, in Superman at Fifty!, saw an Oedipal conflict with the mad scientist Lex Luthor as a father figure. Reynolds expands on Roebuck's analysis, noting that Joseph Campbell's concept of "atonement with the father" is the Oedipal conflict.

Arthur Asa Berger, in The Comic-Stripped American, sees Superman as the exemplar of the divided self, with Americans

clinging to fantasy instead of mundane reality which Clark Kent represents. Berger has written a marvelous cultural analysis of American traits reflected in comic strip characters, and his wide-ranging nature of viewpoints is awe-inspiring. More social criticism than mythology, he does manage to include Carl Jung and the famous mythologist Mircea Eliade in his source material.

Superman is clearly the Hero archetype, with many possible points of view on that. He fits in Jung's typology of the Masculine archetype as a man of action, one step up from the purely physical man and one step below the man with a message. What relationship does he have to science and technology? He is its son: his father was a scientist, and his baby cradle was an advanced rocket ship that brought him to Earth. He has been a scientist himself in the past, using equipment in his Fortress of Solitude in the Arctic, or more recently merely using technology which his robots in the fortress create. That alien robot technology in the fortress served to carry him through a complete mythic cycle of death and rebirth in 1992 and 1993.

Superman has gone through many changes lately. In 1986, his story line was restarted by DC Comics, with a continuous character progression which eventually spread across four different titles, thus giving one episode per week. Unlike the original story from 1938 to 1985, he revealed his secret identity to Lois Lane, and he is her fiancée as Clark Kent. They sleep together now. This fitting in with modern society has not ended the potential for archetypal adventures. In 1993, Superman was really killed by an

alien called Doomsday. He was reborn thanks to the efforts of technology from his home planet, Krypton, which the robots in his fortress used. This story of death and rebirth lasted less than a year, but two years later there are still loose ends in it being tied up, extending the cycle's time.

Every kid who reads comics for any amount of time soon learns part of the common wisdom that you don't ever really see anyone killed off completely; they'll return one way or another. This is a colloquial recognition of the heroic formula of death and rebirth, exemplified by Superman's death. That wisdom is usually applied to the apparent deaths of villains, and the supervillains also partake of archetypal events including rebirths. Or the villains can be archetypes.

In a sense, any superhero or supervillain is an archetypal character, but some are more obvious than others. A likely type of villain would be a Trickster, and Superman has his share of them. Up to the 1950s, Superman's main opponent, his arch-enemy, was the Prankster. As noted in Chapter One, Superman has Mr. Mxyzptlk or Mr. Mxyzptlk (originally one character but now two) as another Trickster opponent. The contrast between the Prankster and the two Mr. M's presents a sort of positive/negative duality of Tricksters. The Prankster, while performing various deceptions as his modus operandi, tries to cultivate a positive social image, often trying to join society as a respectable member so that he can pull a tricky heist. The Mr. M's form a kind of negative complement to the Prankster. They come from another dimension, and they just make

mischievous with their magical powers. Superman has to trick them into spelling their names backwards, and then they vanish.

This positive/negative duality of Trickster opponents also manifests itself with Batman. His famous foe The Joker is the negative Trickster, a vicious killer who is often locked up in an insane asylum. The positive Trickster is a mischievous imp called Bat-Mite, who is almost a duplicate of the Mr. M's. He comes from another dimension and has magical powers, but he adores Batman, so much that he wears his own version of a Batman costume. He creates troubles so he can see Batman solve them. Bat-Mite thus has no particularly negative goals for society.

The Flash is a hero who runs super fast, and he presents us with another pair of Trickster opponents in a polarity. He has an arch-enemy actually called the Trickster, who occupies the negative polarity as a criminal, although he tries to go straight sometimes. His complement may be Professor Zoom the Reverse Flash. Like Bat-Mite and the Mr. M's, Professor Zoom comes from another dimension of sorts. The other dimension he comes from is simply the future. This is a criminal who also can run fast, and he idolizes the Flash. He has impersonated the Flash at least three times, indicating the positive polarity since he tries to join society as his idol.

The Flash illustrates the principle that heroes can be reborn with a different person taking over the role and costume. One Flash died in 1985, and his nephew became the new Flash. Regardless of the superhero's "identity", the same arch-villains

still oppose him. The Reverse Flash illustrates the principle that supervillains can be reborn. He was killed by the Flash, but since he is a time traveller from the future he can still return to make trouble, "before" his death.

Possibly this duality of Tricksters can be found for any superhero with a well-developed roster of villains. If not, it presents creative opportunities for new supervillains to fill a niche. Villains can be other archetypes, also. George Victor (q.v.) discusses the appeal of many real villains as "dark Heroes". This can explain the public's interest in gangsters or serial killers.

Another polarity-duality exists between Superman and Batman, for Batman is Superman's Shadow. Batman was intentionally created for this purpose in 1939, as a complement to Superman, and his creators make no secret of it.⁽³⁾ They may not speak in Jungian terms, but the Shadow aspect is clear. Superman is a creature of the daylight, even nourished by solar energy in his modern version. Batman is the creature of the night, who skulks in shadows. Superman is a super-powered alien, whereas Batman is a normal man without super powers. While Superman is the son of a scientist, Batman is a scientist himself. Batman himself does the research in his laboratory Batcave. His Batcave is the Shadow version of the Fortress of Solitude. The fortress is in white snow, isolated in the open Arctic. The Batcave is an underground cavern of shadows, situated near a city.

It is generally recognized in comics fandom that Batman is

Superman's Shadow or dark side, even if the Jungian precision is unknown. As for what scholars have to say, there is Widzer's distinction of age appeal cited earlier, with Batman relating to the 10 to 12 year-old stage of realism, versus Superman's appeal to younger kids who use magical thinking. Berger has a Freudian analysis of Batman, seeing him as an "archaic ego" with generalized guilt to work out on the entire criminal underworld. Reynolds sees him as obsessively angry all his life, driven by revenge for the murder of his parents. As Reynolds explicates, Batman was also given a mythic rebirth in 1986 in a self-contained story, 'The Dark Knight Returns', written and drawn by Frank Miller. Batman got another rebirth in his ongoing story continuity in 1993-1994 with the 'Knightfall' story line, in which his back was broken and he was out of action for months.

Frank Miller, of Batman fame, presents a clear case of deliberate use of mythology with superheroes. In fact, I will now have to eat my sarcastic words about the play 'Oedipus' which I wrote at the start of the previous chapter. Tim Blackmore (q.v.) has shown how Miller's 1987 portrayal of Marvel Comics' character Daredevil fits Sophocles' play. Daredevil is a hero who is blind, but he has a radar sense which gives him super sight. In Miller's story line, he goes through symbolic death and rebirth, matching Oedipus's struggles to discover the rotten truth about society and falling from grace to the position of an injured outcast. This story shares Sophocles' investigation of "common man as hero in society", even if Miller was unaware of it at the time he created

it.

Superman, Batman, the Flash, Wonder Woman, various Green Lanterns, and others have joined into a group known as the Justice League. This group has gone through clear story cycles of breakups and reformations. One cycle from 1991 to 1992 was actually titled "Breakdowns", while a 1987 cycle was titled "The End of the Justice League". The group has its share of archetypes, depending on how the different writers interpret it. There was a humorous period in the League when buffoonery was played up, and many Tricksters emerged. The heroes Booster Gold and Blue Beetle were a comedy team in the League. The most notable Trickster was the Green Lantern Guy Gardner, an immature jerk at times. Now out of the League, Gardner has advanced up the scale of Masculine archetype stages. He is in his own book in 1994, titled 'Guy Gardner: Warrior'. He has become a man of action.

The ultimate superhero group of the future is the Legion of Super Heroes, begun in 1958. Before comics entered the self-conscious mythological stage, the science fiction writers who wrote the Legion put in mythic motifs. For example, the theme of rebirth was notable in the early stories with the death and rebirth of the hero Lightning Lad. Lately, the Legion also goes through its share of breakups and reformations. In preparation for its 35th anniversary in 1993, it went through the ultimate breakup in 1992. The entire Earth was blown up, with some cities escaping into outer space to form a space colony. The stage had been set for this by the writers having the moon blown up in 1991. This occurred in a

three-year cycle in which the Legion "re-formed" in 1989. In the story's time line, they had been disbanded for five years, although the publication of the comic book had been continuous.

Marvel Comics has a group which epitomizes science fictional use of technology: The Fantastic Four. Berger (q.v.) notes the optimistic attitude towards technology that they represent. While villains may oppose them with technological weapons, the FF uses superior morality and machinery to beat them. Thus, Marvel Comics does not ignore the hazards of science and technology, but it has that all-American optimism which is lacking from the higher arts and literary culture.

Reynolds (q.v.) also has things to say about the Fantastic Four and technology. Part of his formula for superheroes is the principle that science serves as magic. While it is used as technology, it does magical things which cannot be explained by real science. Often, in fact, science and magic coexist in the comic book world. Certainly he is right in that the pseudo-scientific explanations in comic books are much worse than in scifi literature. In scifi lit, the principle is to violate no known science, merely to speculate on what could be developed from current theory. For all that, the scientific magic in comic books can evoke a sense of wonder more easily.

Other archetypal characters are notable. Marvel has the Hulk, who could be called the Id. When a scientist gets upset, he changes into a green muscleman who is usually lacking in intelligence, and very angry and violent. He is a definite

physical man, at the first stage of the Masculine archetype. From 1983 to 1986, Marvel had Coyote - the genuine Indian Trickster! This was probably the most explicit archetype for a decade.

DC Comics has undertaken explicitly Jungian characters in the 1990s. Manhunter is the Wild Huntsman of German myth. Animal Man taps into The Red, which is described and portrayed as the collective unconscious of the animal kingdom. The Sandman has dealings with a trickster god. The most Jungian one of all is called Anima. This is a girl who can access a monster from another dimension, called Animus. Animus can have a Shadow monster of his own to fight. The writers of this title have added a dimension to the Jungian system, called the mythic unconscious. This is where the reified archetypes dwell. The disappointment of this series is that the subtle concepts of Jungian archetypes are reified into fixed characters who don't match their Jungian functions. The Animus is not the man inside the girl, and Anima is not the woman inside any man. She took her name Anima rather randomly, before she knew she had the Animus. Her name might be a feminine version of animus, in its common meaning as hostility. She was reborn after being killed by monsters from outer space, though.

An earlier expression of the Anima and Animus was done by DC with Doctor Fate, from 1988 to 1992. This was a wonderful reworking of a hero from the 1940s' Golden Age of comics. In keeping with tradition, a magic helmet turns its wearer into one of the most powerful magicians in the universe, Dr. Fate. The new twist was that both a man and woman should transform and merge into

the single entity of Dr. Fate. Two couples did this in the series, and it presented an examination of romantic relationships combined with superhero deeds of magic. This was much closer to the function of the archetypes, which facilitate bonding with an opposite sex partner and having a satisfying relationship. While Jungian psychology was faithfully rendered, there was almost no mention of it in the written text.

FINAL WRAPUP: COLLECTING, TULIP MANIA, AND MULTI MEDIA

A few final observations on the entertainment subculture of comic books come to mind. Unlike movies, TV, or science fiction literature, financial speculation has become a major influence on the pastime of comic book collecting. The other subcultures have the same trade in memorabilia, but that can be ignored by most of their members. Comic book readers can collect inexpensive comics without participating in the speculation, but they can't ignore it. The industry has adopted a hysterical pose that today's comics will be as valuable as the ones of thirty to fifty years ago. Prices skyrocket for comics which are only thirty years old, from what is called the "Silver Age".

This financial hysteria seems to resemble what was called the Tulip Mania in the 16th century Netherlands. When tulips were first introduced to the country, people went crazy over them and paid small fortunes for the rare flowers. Nowadays, you can buy them at any streetcorner flower stall for a few dollars. As old comics become scarce, some rich collectors seem to have succumbed

to Tulip Mania. However, a principle from book collecting is: age and scarcity do not equal rarity, or high value. Since comics fans are incorporating so much recognition of economics into their world view, eventually they might learn that lesson, too. For all the Tulip Mania, the mass appeal of comic books remains as entertainment, fortunately.

Of course, I have not touched upon the area where comics and moving pictures combine into a new entertainment mode which is enormously popular with the young: video games. Indeed, the top video games make more money than the top grossing movies, although the total audiences are smaller. In this realm, the interactive demands of comics are present with the utmost minimum of literacy demands. Further, the easy visual satisfactions of moving pictures occur, for once the viewer pushes a button, the figures on the screen move by themselves.

The popular success of this medium can be seen as combining the advantages of both mediums: comics and TV. There is a measure of archetypal satisfaction when players have heroes they can identify with, and this is the rule for such genres as martial arts video games. Concerned parents and censors miss the point with these games when they criticize them for encouraging violence, just as they missed the point for comic books.

The new entertainment use of video games, cyberspace, and virtual reality does illustrate the concept of "mythic space-time" as a time and space locus for heroic violence, separate from the normal world. "Once upon a time" and "In a faraway land" have been

transformed in the scientific age.

However, I am not able to say much more about video games because they do not interest me for some reason. I never took to them, for they always seemed too artificial to me. The medium was born in my early adulthood, and it has undoubtedly solved many of the crude problems which turned me off, but I have enough forms of entertainment to satisfy me as I approach middle age. I will leave it to other writers to explore the imaginary heroes in the video realm.

And for that matter, the video realm and comics form part of what could be called the multimedia realm, for the same characters show up in every possible medium. You can see the movie of the animated TV cartoon show of the comic book of the video game, and wear the t-shirt while trading baseball-type collector's cards with your pals. In your bedroom with posters on the wall above pewter figurines on top of your bookshelf which has trade paperback collections of the comic nestled among video cassette recordings of interviews with the people who make it all up. Or maybe you could take your kids to see the characters perform in the ice skating show or at Disneyland or some other amusement park, wearing their buttons of their heroes and carrying their souvenir lunchboxes and action figure toys. Maybe they'll dress up like their heroes at Halloween, buying the costume from a store where you can also buy souvenir paper plates and cups and napkins for their birthday parties. You can use the leftover stuff to serve them their souvenir breakfast cereal with, and don't forget the superhero

vitamins.

Not all of these multimedia characters are scientific heroes, to be sure; most may just be children's cartoon characters like Mickey Mouse. But some of them will be: Batman or Superman or Spiderman or whoever. Who knows what kind of influence those heroes will have on the growing child's attitude towards science and technology? One thing is certain: they won't grow up unaware of it.

CHAPTER FIVE: FURTHER IDEAS

"A man will go through half a library to make one book."

Samuel Johnson, 1775

We will now enter a more abstract-historical realm, and consider the different perspectives on imaginary heroes in more depth. So far, the view has been Jungian and focused on archetypes. This can be put in the context of other psychological interpretations, enabling a sort of theoretical superstructure for the analysis of pop culture. This doesn't give a grandiose new scheme so much as further introduction for the student, of what the scholars already know.

Indeed, one has to take great care when psychologically analyzing pop culture, because any "discoveries" may merely be of the guidelines consciously used by psychologically astute writers and artists. One can't take the analyses as proof of the reality of the concepts, such as archetypes, since creators may be

imitating explicit archetypes.

The great thinkers had it easier. In The Interpretation of Dreams, Freud compared Shakespeare's Hamlet to the ancient Greek play Oedipus Rex, as a means of proving the reality of the Oedipus complex. Other psychoanalysts like Jung and Otto Rank analyzed myths and legends to prove their theories. The subsequent interaction between psychoanalysis and modern storytelling has become so intentional that most scholars nowadays are left to puzzle out what a writer or artist intentionally did. Whole journals are devoted to articles which explicate the conscious sources of modern writers. The most acclaimed modern author, James Joyce, also provides academics with the most fertile ground to pick over. But Joyce's transformation of heroes and myths will not concern us here.

My purpose in this chapter is twofold. On one hand, I will present the most salient historical analyses of imaginary heroes. On the other, I will relate these ideas to my own explications. To the extent that some reflected glory falls on my own ideas, that can support my ideas as having some intellectual validity. Regardless of that, the interested reader will gain a further understanding of imaginary heroes, in the age of science or any age.

THE PSYCHOANALYTICAL PYRAMID

Most of this chapter will cover varieties of psychoanalysis, which was begun by Sigmund Freud. Rather, the essential trinity of

Freud, Adler, and Jung will be presented, with the fourth great, Otto Rank, included as the exit program that he made for the system. To be sure, what Freud began has been transformed by many thinkers since, up to current and trendy ideas. There are feminist interpretations of psychoanalysis, there are French philosophers who have used it for a springboard into sexual libertinism. But we will stick mainly to the four basic founders, who finished the original form. Good ideas are still developing, and the field is still suspect among psychologists of the laboratory-hard science variety. John W. Campbell expressed a typical attitude of scientists when he called psychoanalytic-type psychology "the modern black arts". But regardless of such precise physiological details, there is a powerful force at work in human motivation, which Freud and his successors explored and tried to understand.

The movement begun by Freud underwent fundamental schisms. His three brightest pupils left him and formed their own systems. First Adler left, calling his ideas "Individual Psychology". Then Jung left, calling his doctrine "Analytic Psychology". Finally, Otto Rank left, not forming a new school so much as finally rejecting all of his colleagues, and focusing on what he sometimes called "Will Psychology".

As Ernest Becker pointed out, these three prodigal sons essentially corrected the initial mistakes made by Freud. What did they do? They filled in the gaps in Freud's theory, fleshing out a bare, cynical materialism with social and spiritual values and drives. What happened to psychoanalysis then? Other forms of

psychology started growing from its ground. Carl Rogers started client-centered therapy, taking sessions away from the omniscient analyst. Finally, humanistic psychology developed, an open-ended acceptance of potential growth in people. Its final triumph could be considered the hierarchy of needs as described by Abraham Maslow. This is typically represented as a pyramid, with different levels to be achieved before a person can progress to the next level of motivation and achievement. Sort of like a video game. The bottom level is the basics of physical survival: food, clothing, shelter, etc. Above that, one can encounter social needs, above that the need for love and affection, and finally one enters the top level of self-actualization. This means that if you have the basic happinesses of life, you are secure to go on to creative self-expression and fulfillment. It's a nice system, and an OK guide for modern living.

Humanistic and lab-science psychology have so overshadowed psychoanalysis that it is left among the creative, artistic people nowadays. Thus, Jung is the current rage in Hollywood. Part of the demise of psychoanalysis is due to the contradictory nature of its thinkers. Freud reduced everything to a few drives like sex and aggression. Adler rejected this and proposed social usefulness as a drive. Jung got into archetypes and their spiritual implications. Rank saw the human will to create as a striving for immortality, and he tied this into the entire history of mankind and religion. Ira Progoff, in The Death and Rebirth of Psychology, showed how Jung and Rank are different faces of the same coin, with

Jung looking at the internal drives while Rank showed their outward forces.

Open-minded psychoanalysts like Progoff take a view which accepts all four schools, from Freud to Rank, as valid, depending on the situation and particular application. While the four men may have denied the truth of each others' views, moderns can realize that their systems are abstract models from which one can pick and choose. This is analogous to scientists choosing the wave or particle theory of light depending on their technological needs. As one of my calculus books said, obviously light is neither wave or particle, but we don't have the mental tools to understand it any better than that. Similarly for psychoanalysis and the dynamics of the conscious versus unconscious mind. And this leads into another model, similar to Maslow's pyramid.

We can think of psychoanalysis as a theoretical pyramid, with Freud providing the bottom layer of drives and explanations for human behavior. Similar to Maslow's video game, one can rise above the Freudian level of need to be driven by the need to have power in the world, to be socially useful and effective. This is the second, Adlerian level. Above that, we have the spiritual or creative needs, the Jungian need for total integration of the personality. Beyond that, we have Rank's recognition of the limited utility of psychoanalysis in the first place, and the human will pursuing creativity and experience without regard to the lower drives. Rank's final book is Beyond Psychology, which continues his disagreements with Freud, but it contains sufficient latitude

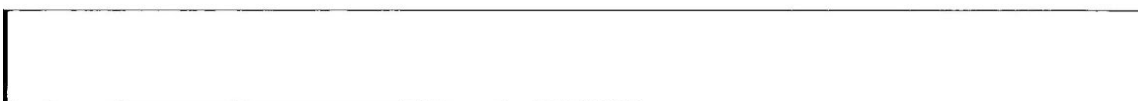
to be used as an exit program more than a disproof.

With psychoanalysis so viewed, we can see the pragmatic validity in taking any approach. This view was expressed by Joseph Campbell in The Power of Myth, in fact. He and Bill Moyers briefly discussed a "geography of the soul" in which the lower drives, such as Freudian, were overlain by higher drives such as Adler's and Jung's. Campbell was also up on Rank enough to cite his hero study, The Myth of the Birth of the Hero, at another place in the show, too.

This profusion of names will be covered at length, with some basic questions for each person. We require to know each one's view of fantasy, violence, heroes, science, and the modern world. We will now follow up on Jung.

By now, the reader knows the gist of Jung's most significant ideas: the archetypes. An earlier achievement was his fourfold typology of personalities, into thinking, feeling, intuitive, and physical types. One of these aspects would be dominant for a person, with the others still possessed in lesser expression. Jung's view of modern civilization was that we emphasize the thinking aspect too much, and should develop the other qualities in our lives. Of course, science comes from the thinking aspect, although the intuition may lead to creative discoveries.

An easy way for comic fans to remember this typology is to think of Marvel Comics' superhero group The Fantastic Four. Their leader, Mister Fantastic, is a scientist - the thinking type. His wife, The Invisible Woman, is the intuitive type. Her brother, The



Human Torch, originally was a "hot-headed" teenager - a feeling type. The fourth superhero, The Thing, is a strong man, thus the physical type. While the group's co-creator, Stan Lee, derived the four characters from the ancient Greek typology of earth, air, fire, and water, this does relate to Jung in an indirect way. Many of Jung's ideas were similarly inspired by alchemy and its Greek antecedents.

What did Jung think of fantasy and heroes? Fantasy he saw as a mental process different from rational thinking. Metaphors, symbols, images, intuition abounded in fantasy thinking. It was easier for archetypes to express themselves in fantasy than in reality. For example, as with the Hero archetype.

In his 1912 book Symbols of Transformation, Jung wrote a chapter called 'The Birth of the Hero'. This is a study of the dreams of a female patient who eventually had a schizophrenic breakdown. Her fantasies with heroes were related to the mythology of the world. Jung showed the social role of the Hero as a personification of the young adult's need to break away from the family and become an independent adult.

The Hero must be more than human to express the total forces of a person's psyche, or soul. Thus, the Hero is a superman. Such a symbol enabled a historical development of a cult of the hero, for masses to be inspired above their mundane reality. This superhero symbolism even facilitates the development of individual personality.

This ties in with Jung's valuation of the importance of

religion. Jung was a deist who considered Jesus a perfect Hero archetype. As such, Jesus could serve to inspire the masses, and their religion could keep them on a moral plane above earthly power politics. The value of Christianity as a counterbalance to the state was thus revealed.

To Jung, good and evil are qualities which are inborn in us, as are the archetypes. The kingdom of heaven is within us, literally. The Hero thus serves psychic or social functions, for the transition of youth to adulthood and identity. To make too strong an identification with heroism for some worldly goals could lead to trouble, as with projection of evil motives onto other people. But where does this leave the pursuit of science in modern civilization?

The focus of my book on science as part of imaginary heroism does miss the point of the archetype. But science is now part of the Hero's milieu, one of the boons he or she may bring back from the adventures. An earlier boon was to merely slay a dragon. Jung interpreted the dragon as the forces of inertia to personal growth. It could symbolize too strong an attachment to family.

Erich Neumann developed these ideas of Jung's further, in the 1949 book The Origins and History of Consciousness. It is considered the other great work on the Hero besides Joseph Campbell's classic. Jung wrote a brief forward in Neumann's book, praising him for seeing further than a pioneer such as himself. Neumann's book treats the Hero archetype as essential to the second stage of life, when the youth must break from the family. He

derived three stages of life which utilize mythical archetypes. First is the stage of the creation myth, then the Hero myth, and finally the transformation myth, when adulthood is achieved.

Neumann also interprets the dragon as the forces of inertia. It could take form as too strong an attachment to the mother or father. Thus, two of the chapters in the Hero section of the book are titled 'The Slaying of the Mother' and 'The Slaying of the Father'. The other chapter, the first, is titled 'The Birth of the Hero' (same title as Jung's in 1912, and both books are taking the title from Otto Rank's original word on the subject in 1909. But Rank is for a later section). Once the dragon is slain by the Hero, the treasure it guarded is taken, and the captive princess may be wed also. In other words, the autonomous youth can finally enter into an adult relationship with a woman, and enjoy the bounties of adulthood.

Neumann's last book, The Child, can be viewed as a sequel to his classic on the Hero. In The Child, he fully developed an archetypal explanation of the separation of the child's ego from the mother's. This contains further remarks on the Hero archetype as a transitional step for the young man.

Anthony Stevens agrees with Neumann on the pivotal stage of the Hero as an archetype for boys separating from their parental ties. He elaborates on this in The Roots of War, which forms an unplanned sequel to his Archetypes book covered in Chapter One.

Both books of Stevens' provide detailed accounts of the Jungian view of violence and aggression. While noting that Freud

could place violence within the aggressive drive, Stevens saw the archetypal view of violence as fitting modern ethology. That is, violence is a potential behavior that we share with all animals. It comes from regions of the brain that predate conscious control, and which cannot be abolished by reason.

What I call the heroic fallacy shows up in Stevens' critique that youth in the heroic stage need dangerous excitement in their lives. He faults the entertainment industry for providing violent models of this (The Roots of War, pages 181-182). However, he also notes that youth have an "initiation hunger" for some kind of ordeal which entertainment cannot totally satisfy (Archetypes, pages 168 and 171). My principle that violence accesses and is expressed by the archetypes can also be found in Stevens. In criticizing media violence, he explains that archetypes are activated on a symbolic level, whether the symbolism is real or imaginary (The Roots of War, page 182).

Similarly, the heroic fallacy is implied in Neumann's work as a consequence of the growth of the young ego beyond the heroic stage. While there can be symbolic violence against the values of any prior stage, any next stage entails a rejection of the prior archetype (The Child, pages 182-183). And while social initiation can occur at any age, the original violent Hero archetype is for the child. It must be rejected and surpassed, or transformed and transcended. For Neumann, the adult archetype incorporates spirituality beyond the violent passions of youth. This includes a marriage of true soulmates.

The upshot of this analysis is that the Hero is firmly placed at the adolescent stage of life, more precisely at the transition from youth to maturity. Is it any wonder then that we find so much heroic entertainment in our society directed at youth? Comic books, science fiction, most movies, TV shows condemned as limited to an eleven year old mentality: they all appeal to kids breaking into puberty and looking for direction thereafter. The standard, distilled message from all of these stories of imaginary heroes is simple. In essence, they say: grow up.

To grow up today, one has to live in a scientific world. The boons of science are often created by older men and women who do not fit into the Jungian scheme of youthful heroism. Similarly for the works of art, music, etc. But many scientists and artists were inspired to choose their careers by heroic role models in their youth, even imaginary ones. A further criticism is that most of science is created by team players instead of loners. How fortunate, then, that creativity is not identical to heroism or to youthfulness. Fortunately for the world, the focus of my book is beside the point for what heroes are about.

Perhaps we can even have some sympathy for those who take anti-science attitudes and criticisms. There apparently is some point to imaginary heroic tales wherein someone warns "Some things man was not meant to know, Dr. Frankenstein!" The mad scientist is too rational; his life is out of balance. He has lost touch with his other faculties of intuition, sensation, and feeling - or compassion. In fact, Stevens points out that the scientific boon

of Prometheus has a mythological consequence. The complete story of Prometheus has him punished by the Gods and bound to a mountain, where an eagle eats his liver every day. Thus bound, Prometheus could not give mankind too much power - power which would not be compassionately controlled (another story has Prometheus rescued from his bondage - perhaps that fits our penchant to push too far).

Science fiction recognized this. Analog magazine's wartime story 'Deadline' is about preventing the Nazis from getting atomic bombs. Such activities were carried out in reality by real commandoes and other unsung heroes. What Nazi Germany needed was liberation, and the psychoanalysts like Freud, Jung, Rank, and Wilhelm Reich analyzed where the society was going wrong. Their works were banned and burned, although it seems that their lessons were assiduously applied in reverse by the Nazi leaders.

Jung hoped to avoid such catastrophes in the future, but he had no program for mass enlightenment. His psychology was restricted to a personal level, as is psychoanalysis almost by definition. Social analyses do abound, such as identifying Jesus or Hitler as archetypal symbols. Corrective measures can be taken, utilizing psychoanalytic principles, but the appeal is still to the individual.

Some other corrective measures are more effective, as when the film director Frank Capra created the 'Why We Fight' World War Two propaganda series based on enemy film. Footage glorifying Axis triumphs and society was repellant to individualistic Americans. Perhaps such series could be made today from various videotapes.

There are so many new threats to our freedom to join the entertainment subcultures of our own choosing.

ADLER VERSUS FREUD

We will now start at the bottom of the pyramid of depth psychology, and give more exposition to the ideas of Sigmund Freud and Alfred Adler, who were briefly mentioned in Chapter One. To illustrate these ideas and their application to imaginary heroes in our time, I will use comic books as the medium of application. The superhero provides an easy subject to demonstrate the validity of different interpretations, depending on what level of the pyramid one is working from. While I have already spent a chapter on various Jungian interpretations, a bit of Jung will also come in for comparison. But first, we will start the mix with some straight history of psychology.

Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) is immortal as the man who started the scientific study of the unconscious mind. In 1896 he coined the word "psychoanalysis", and published his classic The Interpretation of Dreams in 1900. His general system of the mind was mainly presented in three later books: Beyond the Pleasure Principle (1920), Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego (1921), and The Ego and the Id (1922). While Freud never did succeed at providing a physiological explanation of his concepts, this does not really invalidate them. For example, he clearly stated that the concept of the Id was merely description of a collection of behavior and action. The actual mental energy that

comprised the Id he called the libido, and in common usage nowadays it is a term for sexual lust. He was unable to prevent his followers and others from reifying the Id concept at times. Eventually we get the invisible monsters of 'Forbidden Planet', the 1956 science fiction movie discussed in Chapter Three: "Monsters from the Id!" But this was not Freud's fault.

To summarize: the Id is the unconscious energy of animal lusts and urges, driven by the Pleasure Principle. Opposing the drives of the Id is the Superego, the partly-conscious collection of morality, derived mainly from the parents in early childhood. One explanation Freud proffered was that the repressions of parents channeled some of the energy of the Id into becoming the Superego. Between these two forces is the conscious Ego, what we perceive as ourselves, driven by the Reality Principle. The Ego balances the urges of the Id against the strictures of the Superego and arrives at realistic behavior.

We can now take a look at comics and see the obvious applications of Freudian concepts. Comic books typically have three classes of people: superheroes, supervillains, and normal people. The simplest analysis merely assigns each class to a Freudian category. The creatures of supreme, terrible lusts and drives are the supervillains, so they are representatives of the Id. Opposing them are the upholders of law and order, good and morality, namely the superheroes. In short, superhero equals Superego. And the normal people, who must live in a world which is essentially our reality, are the normal Egos.

What then does this make of superhero comics read by children? They are getting morality plays of good versus evil, reified versions of their Superego conditioning. This could be influential upon them, to strengthen their good consciences. This carries a positive valuation of early superhero comics that are so disparaged by modern fans. Modern fans like "sophisticated" stories with "complex" characters, heroes who may be hard to separate from the villains. This is presumably to approach the literary portrayals of the realism of adult life. However, the "childish" simplicity of comics in the 1940s to 1970s fit a different kind of realism which has generally not been praised. The imaginary heroes and their adventures were reifications of basic Freudian processes.

Fittingly enough, Freud himself has gotten into his own comic, but it is a serious educational work. This is the 1979 illustrated book Freud for Beginners, part of a series of books introducing famous thinkers or topics. The student of pop culture or interested layman would be well begun by reading this work as an introduction to Freud and psychoanalysis.

We now have the standard questions to address. What did Freud think of fantasy? It was part of what he called primary process thinking, meaning a more primitive kind than adult rationality. The weird symbolism of dreams could be an expression of primary processes. Childish thinking is primary, and this includes nonverbal media such as visual pictures. Adults think verbally, with words and concepts. Children require concrete reifications, no abstractions. Fantasy could thus also be the dominant mode of

thought for neurosis.

Freud's view of science and modern times follows from the evaluation of primary processes. Scientific rationality to him was the supreme liberator of the human mind, an ultimate expression of the Reality Principle. He believed that if people could realize the causes of their behavior, then they could struggle to change their behavior. But most people do not progress much beyond childish patterns of thought. For example, he considered religion as childish thinking, and thus he expressed his pessimism with modern times in The Future of an Illusion (1928) and Civilization and Its Discontents (1930).

As for violence and heroes, they figure prominently in a few places in Freud's work. The Oedipus complex derives from a myth of a hero who uses violence to kill his father. Freud further developed this idea in his 1913 book Totem and Taboo, to theorize in a "scientific myth" that the incest taboo comes from an inherited guilt over a prehistoric family's crime of the sons killing their father. Aside from these two hallmarks, violence mainly figures as an urge of the Id, which may be fantasized in dreams. Or violent aggression could be a manifestation of the Death Instinct, which was seen as a balance to the sexual urges.

In 1915, Freud directly addressed the concept of imaginary heroes in one page of his long essay, Thoughts for the Times on War and Death. Such fictional enjoyments he saw as compensations for our fear of personal death. In stories of heroes who die, we can entertain yearnings for immortality by being killed as a character

and living on as a reader. "In the realm of fiction we discover that plurality of lives for which we crave. We die in the person of a given hero, yet we survive him, and are ready to die again with the next hero just as safely." The basic aspect of a hero Freud subsequently defined as overcoming the fear of death to commit a great act.

Freud had little else to say about heroes. But he did discuss the topic with Otto Rank, to help with Rank's 1909 book which would apply Freud's ideas to the subject.

Discussions with Rank eventually bore fruit in 1921, in three fascinating pages in a postscript to Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego. As mentioned previously, this book is one of Freud's theoretical trilogy. The three pages in the postscript form a supplement to Freud's Totem and Taboo. Freud claims that the first hero is the youngest son who first slew the father in prehistoric times. The first myth is thus a transformation of this murder from a group act to a lone hero's act. Thus, the hero myth signals the beginning of individuality. "The myth, then, is the step by which the individual emerges from group psychology." Note the resemblance to the Jungian interpretation of the heroic myth as the adolescent step out of the family. To Freud, it was the beginning of personal identity, a removal of the power of identification which binds group members to blindly follow a leader. For this identification power is the essential concept of Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego.

The book also has various references to the heroic violence

which group members are supposed to exhibit from earliest, prehistoric times, but this is seen as a mere survival necessity, evolving into the ability to commit mob violence or go to war. In one passage, Freud did touch upon hero worship of entertainers, remarking in passing on women and girls "who crowd round a singer or pianist after his performance, ... , they act as a united group, do homage to the hero of the occasion with their common actions,". Alas, this was merely an example of identification with the group leader.

There are two other places in Freudian theory where mythology figures prominently, besides with the Oedipus character. Narcissus, the mythical youth who fell in love with his own reflection, had his name adapted to the concept of narcissistic libido. This refers to sexual interest restricted to one's self. Narcissus thus comes to symbolize one of the dangers of adolescence, a failing which could continue into adulthood. It is fitting that this character names the problem, since Narcissus is not a hero. Likewise, narcissism can be seen from an archetypal perspective as a failure to break from infantilism to enter into an adult relationship with a sexual partner.

The other mythical character dealt with by Freud to some degree was none other than the original scientific hero, Prometheus! The manner in which he considered this myth shows the difference between the reductionism of psychoanalysis versus the rich cultural interpretation of other depth psychologies.

There are various Freudian interpretations of Prometheus.

What we have left to know about him is that he was of the mythical race of Titans, or giants who were demigods. One creation myth has him forming the first people out of mud. The mud can be interpreted as excrement, and so Prometheus becomes a symbol of the anal stage of child development. He is creative by making something out of his waste. In fact, each one of the mythical characters prominent in psychoanalysis can serve as a representative of an early stage of child psychology. The first stage is oral gratification, as narcissistic as is possible for a new child with the slightest of egos. Then comes anal interest and Prometheus. Next comes phallic interest, and the Oedipus conflict eventually results around age five or six. This is presumably followed by a sexual latency stage as a respite from the Oedipus conflict. Puberty brings a channeling of libido onto real-life sexual partners. But this is not the interpretation of Prometheus which serves us as well as a more direct confrontation by Freud.

In a sort of delayed postscript to Civilization and Its Discontents, Freud considered Prometheus in 1931. The resultant six-page essay is titled The Acquisition and Control of Fire in the Standard Edition of Freud's works. Freud begins by noting that Prometheus is a "culture hero", and then proceeds to trace his origin to the first primitive man who did not put out a fire by urinating on it. This is the source of modern science: a caveman who learned to control a primitive pleasure urge, and brought rational power to the community.

It is ironically fitting that Freud should interpret

Prometheus so, since Freud himself is a real Prometheus, who brought the light of rationality to study the irrational, unconscious mind. He is typically pictured with his cigar, which is easily interpreted as a phallic symbol. It is also the Promethean flame, symbolically and literally. Since he stressed the importance of sex, the phallic symbol serves well as the fire he brought to mankind. But the cigar is also literally a burning object. And since Freud symbolically pissed on the whole concept of scientific heroes, it is fitting that his flame-phallic symbol should double as the organ of urination.

I should add here that the psychoanalytic study of mythology is not so limited as what I have sketched. It is rather well developed, and enough so that Joseph Campbell praised it in The Hero With a Thousand Faces in 1949. The beginning of Part Two of Campbell's book notes in passing the work of Freud, Jung, Rank, Wilhelm Stekel, Karl Abraham, Geza Roheim, "and many others". At another place in the book, Campbell likened the psychoanalytic therapy session to a heroic adventure, with the analyst serving as the hero's helper to the patient-as-hero. The unknown unconscious was the land of terrible adventure. He then followed this with his own explication of the Oedipus-Hamlet identity, first made by Freud.

While Freud's name is literally a household word, the name of Alfred Adler is virtually unknown today among the general public. In his lifetime and shortly after, Adler was as successful and famous as Freud. Dale Carnegie, the author of the Ur-text of self

help books, How to Win Friends and Influence People (1936) even cited Adler in his book. Adler's name has mainly died out due to such an overwhelming success. Most of his concepts are now household words, as firmly entrenched in the English vocabulary as Freud's lingo. Such terms as inferiority complex, superiority complex, power fantasy, lifestyle, and social interest owe their origins to him.

Alfred Adler (1870-1937) was a fellow traveler with Freud. Adler agreed with so much of Freud's ideas that he became the number two man in Freud's circle, The Vienna Psychoanalytical Society. As mentioned in Chapter One, Adler disagreed with Freud's supreme valuation of sex as the fundamental drive of the unconscious mind. In 1911, the two men parted company. Adler continued to develop his own ideas on what motivates mankind.

To Adler, the individual was motivated by the drive for personal power, overcoming whatever inferiorities one had in one's life. These inherent problems and abilities could give a person an individual, innate goal to strive for, even if unconsciously. A person would have a "style of life" in pursuit of such a goal. For example, one with a superiority complex over others would be really trying to defeat an inferiority complex. The feeling of inferiority could be unconscious or known. It could be concerned with mental, physical, or social problems. But it would be worked out in the context of society, for that is the meaningful place for mastery of life's situations.

Adler distinguished three main arenas requiring competence:

work, love, and society. The categories of work and love had been isolated by Freud, but Adler saw an equally important need to just be able to get along with one's fellows. The innate human sociability could develop into "social interest", or a spirit of cooperation with society. Those lacking in social interest become too self-centered in their goal striving, and typically become criminals, social deviants, or the mentally ill. An exception is the creative thinker who is only apparently self-centered until his work is finished and adds to society thereby.

As for Adler's views on science and modern times, he retained Freud's skepticism that depth psychology would ever apply beyond a minority of mankind. Most people would stick to traditional religion, and Adler had no complaint about that. Those who needed a more scientific grounding in morality could use depth psychology. But Adler's larger project was to popularize his ideas and turn society towards healthy social interest instead of strife and division. He eschewed arcane complexity and tried to simplify his messages. He wanted people to make themselves useful to society.

Science was a fine thing to improve the world, but Adler considered the arts as the most important occupations. The artist, musician, or writer teaches people how to feel, and this gets to the essence of social cooperation.

What did Adler think of fantasy? He saw an overreliance on it as a method of compensation for inferiority. Of course, the power to fantasize was also seen as a part of human foresight, and it can thus interact with feelings to fix one's goals in life.

As for violence, this was one area in which Adler conflicted with Freud, if we take the more general view of violence as part of aggression. Adler recognized an aggressive drive in people, which Freud denied for decades. Upon incorporating it into his Death Instinct, Freud did not acknowledge the influence of Adler. He had complained that Adler was more popular to the world because he replaced sex with aggression as the main drive, and squeamish society could handle that better than the real truth.

This charge was an inaccurate oversimplification on Freud's part, but Adler was often misunderstood on the subjects of aggression and power. The Nietzschean phrase "will to power" was sometimes employed by Adler, and it added to the misperception of him as an advocate of aggressive force. He was interested in the social aspects of life's meaning, and things like aggression and violence he took for granted.

An example shows how casually Adler could incorporate violence into his other concepts. He discussed the mind-set of a murderer who killed a man for his coat. What seems a hideously wasteful act to most people seems perfectly logical to the criminal. Why? Because the criminal has no social interest, and so it is totally self-serving to kill for a coat. Such psychodynamics of villains have become standard fare in fictional entertainment nowadays. This typifies the principle that evil people do not think of themselves as evil.

Adler did not say much about heroes, but he did cite hero-worship as another form of individual escapism. To use a

contemporary comic book example, the stereotypical skinny kid with glasses indulges himself in a reverie wherein he is musclebound and super-sighted. As mentioned in Chapter One, this is an example of a compensatory power fantasy.

However, in comparison with the Freudian analysis of comics, another Adlerian view is possible. Instead of a Superego guiding us, Adler saw individual goals of perfection, what he sometimes called the self-ideal. Let us replace the Superego=superhero equation by a self-ideal=superhero equation. Thus, if the self-ideal is the superhero of comic books, the superhero is the goal of the style of life: to be strong, virtuous, healthy, an exceptional contributor to society.

This is especially evident when the particular superhero is an alter-ego for a normal person who undergoes some kind of transformation to become super. The most famous example is probably the kid Billy Batson, who says "Shazam!" and becomes Captain Marvel. The usually unconscious style of life is quite conscious when Billy speaks the magic word. His goal is clear. In other words, comic book creators are teaching kids how to feel, how to realize the goals that pull or drive them.

Thus we have two opposite Adlerian views of a form of imaginary hero in the age of science. But the principle of social interest removes the apparent contradiction. Let us take the positive view first. While the superhero is a good goal for a style of life, what is a supervillain? Like any criminal, the supervillain lacks social interest; he turns his powers to selfish

ends. Let us now take the negative view that comics are escapist power fantasies. What's wrong with that? Too much time spent on it deflects social interest. It can keep the kids from doing productive things that may enhance their real lives. But if the kids spend enough time with the comics, they will get the message that the goal of life is to make the world a better place.

This issue gets clouded when other genres of comics are considered. For example, the 1950s-era campaign against comics was based on charges of antisocial modeling provided by crime and horror comics. The only lifestyle goals seemed to be crime and violence, according to the critics. Mainstream society does think in Adlerian terms, and antisocial modeling was not approved of in the 1950s. A resurgence of such efforts has led to a new scientific boon: the V-chip, a television control to give parents the power to censor violent TV shows. I wonder if Adler would have approved?

RANK AND BECKER

One of the original sources for the study of heroes was Otto Rank (1884-1939). As already noted, he published his classic work, The Myth of the Birth of the Hero: A Psychological Interpretation of Mythology, in 1909. This was one of his major contributions to Freudian psychoanalysis. Freud worked with him on the book, and the analyses take a classical Freudian view. This shows up briefly in the introduction, and then at length in the last 34 pages of the book. The whole book is only 99 pages long!

Rank analyzed the birth stories of the following heroes: Sargon of Babylon, Moses, Karna of India, Oedipus, Paris, Telephos, Perseus, Gilgames of Babylonia (or Gilgamesh), Kyros of Persia, Tristan, Romulus, Jesus, Siegfried, and Lohengrin. Various other mythic heroes show up in related references in the book, also. From these fifteen stories, he derived a standard formula for the hero's story which more or less fits all the characters.

The formula can be broken into seven parts, which were aptly labeled by George Victor (1) as: Parentage, Conception, Prophecy, Abandonment, Rescue and Exile, Return, and Discovery. In short, the hero is some kind of abandoned child, who returns to his homeland to kill his father and discover his true identity. The hero then assumes a high position in society, which was his birthright.

How does Rank interpret this formula? He sees two fundamental forces at work: projection and rebellion. The child's break from the parents to form an individual identity is the source of the heroism: "The true hero of the romance is, therefore, the ego, which finds itself a hero, through its first heroic act, i.e., the revolt against the father." A child may feel guilty for its hostile rebellion, so this hostility is projected onto oppressive, abandoning parents in the myth. Thus Rank saw the main motive of the myth as "vindication of the individual through the hero". Two opposite, subordinate motives caused the myths to arise: affection towards the parents, and revolution.

A couple of quick examples show how comic books fit into

Rank's formula. The two most famous superheroes of all time were orphans: Superman and Batman. Being orphaned is an irrevocable way of being abandoned by one's parents. Batman saw his parents killed by a street criminal. In Superman's case, he also fit Rank's pattern of floating upon the waters in a crib, only it was a rocket in outer space for the super baby. For he was sent to Earth as his home planet, Krypton, blew up in a natural cataclysm.

Rank's last book, Beyond Psychology (1939), takes a far broader view of the Hero. As noted, Rank had long since broken from Freud's society (in 1924). In 1909, he started from a Freudian take on heroes, fantasy, and violence. Thirty years later, he culminated his life's work with a profound integration of the imaginary hero into all ages of history, leading up to the problems of the age of science.

Beyond Psychology is such a wondrous book that I will list its chapter titles to give some overview of its breadth: Psychology and Social Change, The Double as Immortal Self, The Emergence of the Social Self, The Creation of Personality, Two Kinds of Love, The Creation of the Sexual Self, Feminine Psychology and Masculine Ideology, and Psychology Beyond the Self. Like Jung, Rank held our modern scientific age to be too dependent on rationality. He saw a need to recognize basic human irrationality, which Freudian psychoanalysis only tried to control in a rational way. The decline of intellectual validity for superstitious religions has resulted in the "Age of Psychology", which can only be a historical stopgap measure until humanity integrates its rationality with its

unreason.

The new view of the Hero makes him one of the central players of humanity. The Hero symbolizes the creative self, originally conceived as the immortal double of a person. Average people vicariously enjoy the Hero's creativity, such as by attending a ritual. Rank didn't overthrow his 1909 book, but rather incorporated it into a wider framework. The Hero no longer simply represents everyman's Ego. Now he represents everyman's soul.

Rank divided mankind into the masses of average people, who were not outstandingly creative, and the deviant creatives. These deviants could be artists, scientists, priests, kings, or other political leaders. Through their cultural works, they become immortal like the Hero. Extremely antisocial deviants could be criminals. Like Jung, Rank held that man had both good and evil inside himself. A healthy acceptance of one's aggressive urges, hostilities, and irrationality could prevent bad things from resulting. Unlike the Freudian goal of rational control or repression, the goal would be a rational channeling of that which cannot be further controlled.

To make a comic book comparison now, the superhero represents either the early Ego interpretation or the later, immortal creative type. Normal people are the average types who engage in hero worship. Supervillains are those who express creativity in evil ways. This clearly fits comic book supervillains: they are super because they have found a creative way to harness power for evil uses.

Rank's gifts to the world have phased in and out of obscurity. Ira Progoff recognized Rank as the fourth essential depth psychologist in The Death and Rebirth of Psychology in 1956. Twenty years later, Rank's views were to receive a Pulitzer Prize for general nonfiction, in the reformulations of another Man With a Rankian Message. His new messenger was Ernest Becker (1924-1974), an anthropologist who was also an authority on psychoanalysis.

Becker presented a Rankian view of man and society in a pair of books: The Denial of Death (1974 prize winner) and Escape From Evil (1975, posthumous). Trained as an anthropologist, Becker focused on the materialistic features of Rank's theories. The cynicism of Freud finds expression in Becker, with passing deference to Jung and any positive evaluation of religion. Perhaps this is why, on his deathbed, he didn't want Escape From Evil published. Fortunately for us, it was anyway.

For Becker teased out the core value of Rank's psychology and used it to explain society. The personal striving for immortality was interpreted as the fundamental human drive, equal in force to Freud's Pleasure Principle or Adler's social interest or Jung's individuation. This is an instinct which obviously finds expression in religion, but Becker explicated how it finds expression in other behavior such as war, money economies, and - hero worship.

Yes, heroes. One of Becker's main themes is a heavy-duty version of the heroic fallacy. Rather than merely looking at the

social irrelevance of heroic violence in everyday life, he looked at the violent heroic urge as a prime motivator of people. It gives societies identity, to have enemies to be in opposition to. In heroic triumph, our striving for immortality is assuaged. The problem of modern life is that we have no appropriate targets for such heroic urges any more. We can only blow ourselves up, choke in our own pollution, or stagnate in alienated anomie. This is part of what Becker called "the failures of heroism".

Becker had no magic cures for the world's ills. Alas Freud, he saw that most people could not become creative self-actualizers. But he did see a moral imperative for social scientists to function as social critics. Even the average masses deserve help to know truth and avoid being manipulated by self-serving elites. Thus the price of mental liberation is eternal vigilance by the intellectuals. This is a Message which any journalist can take to heart.

This view of the functions of heroism is more important but less relevant to the study of imaginary heroes in popular culture. It does give a Rankian explanation for people's interest in heroic tales. But the psychology stops there, as a version of vicarious relief of immortality strivings. While the depth psychology does not go on, there is some room for the concept of entertainment subcultures to come in. They are one way to try to satisfy the "failures of heroism", by giving an ongoing satisfaction to the heroic urge.

With the four depth psychologists now explicated, the

differing perspectives upon comic books can be summarized in a table.

COMICS	FREUD	ADLER	JUNG	RANK
Superhero	Superego	self-ideal	archetype	Ego/ creative immortal
normal people	Ego	socially interested persons	Ego	average uncreative persons
Super- villain	Id	no social interest	archetype	evil use of creativity

Jung's place in this table bears some further explanation. Archetypes are taken to have a positive and negative aspect, thus a superhero represents the positive and the supervillain represents the negative. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the Trickster can be one form of a negative Hero. Thus, trickster villains abound in comics, like the Joker (vs. Batman), Prankster (vs. Superman), and Trickster (vs. Flash). Or, the Trickster can be a positive Hero archetype, as in many mythological tales.

Using the negative Trickster, I further divided it into a positive/negative duality based upon a social criteria which fits the Adlerian concept of social interest. This was illustrated by the supervillain characters Joker/Bat-Mite, Prankster/Mr. Mxyzptlk, and Trickster/Professor Zoom. One could probably create other criteria to make polar pairs within a specific positive or negative aspect of an archetype. Such mental exercises could go on forever, and one should keep in mind that an actual character who represents

an archetype is an expression of an instinct in a social situation, rather than a real mental entity. With archetypes, one has the same danger of literal misinterpretation that Freud encountered with his concept of mental dynamics and Id energy.

We further see the remaining close relationship between Jung's ideas and Freud's, since the Ego is the same in both places on the table. Jung conceived of the Ego as an island floating on an ocean of the Unconscious. The shallow depths around the island are the personal unconscious, what could possibly be retrieved into consciousness. Dreams occur here. This is where Freud worked. Further out, the deep waters are the collective unconscious. These depths are not directly viewable by the conscious Ego. That is where the instinctual patterns of the archetypes come from. One can look for common symbols in dreams and myth to identify archetypes. One can look elsewhere, as Anthony Stevens did with primate ethology. Or one can look at comic books.

Of course, the situation with comics is one of intentional use at times by informed creators. Or these creators may be imitated by other creators who don't know the psychological sources used. Or sometimes, it just may be a lucky occurrence of an actual archetype breaking through. Regardless of these possibilities, I hold that the success of comic book superheroes derives in part from their access to archetypes. This is satisfying to young audiences which are at the Hero stage of youth. There are other satisfactions, which fit the perspectives of Freud, Adler, or Rank. And there is also the most obvious satisfaction of escapist fun,

which is an Adlerian power fantasy. But then, is not such a power fantasy so appealing because it plugs into archetypal needs?

OTHER PERSPECTIVES

This section will address various scholars' works which do not fit into the preceding depth psychology. It is somewhat of a gathering of loose ends, but more than that will emerge.

Outside of mythology, and before psychoanalysis, a significant scholar of heroes was Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881), the British essayist. He blazed trails for the interpretation of real heroes throughout history. In 1840, he gave a series of six lectures on heroes, which were published as the book On Heroes and Hero-Worship. The phrase "hero worship" was coined by Carlyle for these lectures. He identified six types of hero, and examined the subjects from a wide perspective, including history, politics, and religion. Each subject type had a few superlative examples to give some focus to his efforts. These subjects and representatives are: the hero as divinity - Odin, the hero as prophet - Mahomet (i.e. Mohammed), as poet - Dante and Shakespeare, as priest - Martin Luther and John Knox, as man of letters - Rousseau, Samuel Johnson and Robert Burns, and as king - Napoleon and Oliver Cromwell. The writing is at times gushy, but this is well compensated for by the brilliant social analyses.

Jumping forward a century, we come to another landmark: The Hero: A Study in Tradition, Myth, and Drama, by F.R.S. Raglan, first published in 1936. He created a detailed model of the Hero's

story, which starts out the same as Rank's seven-step model of 1909. Of 22 steps in Raglan's model, the first 13 cover Rank's, while the remaining nine take the story beyond Rank's conclusion. Rank's model ends when the Hero attains an honorable status in his homeland. Beyond that, the Hero goes into a decline, losing his status and power, dying mysteriously and ending in the final step with holy sepulchres.(2)

Raglan is, of course, the tip of the iceberg for scholarly study of mythology outside of psychologists. A blossoming in the 1950s led to many interpretations, a few of which were cited by our next scholar, S.N. Eisenstadt.

In 1961, Eisenstadt had a seminar essay published, titled 'Archetypal Patterns of Youth'.(3) He did not mean archetypes in a strictly Jungian sense, although there is some crossover in his analysis of social functions. For example, Anthony Stevens saw a basic archetype for youth as bonding in a same-sex group for adventure activities, before settling down with a mate (see The Roots of War). However, Eisenstadt took a sociological view. He saw the problem of modern youth as a loss of clear role models or linkages to a cultural conception of time.

And in the analysis of time, Eisenstadt really broke into mythical subjects. He noted the rituals of primitive societies to incorporate youth into adulthood. These are tied to mythical concepts of time, and he cites mythological sources for further pursuit of mythical time, including Joseph Campbell and the great Mircea Eliade. Before getting to Eliade, we should note that

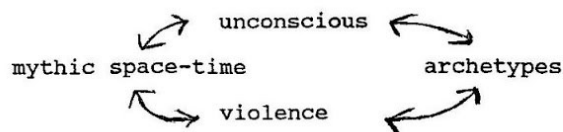
Eisenstadt was concerned with the breakdown of traditional roles for youth in modern, technological civilization. He retained optimism that the freedom and creativity of the age of science could help youth regain its linkage to the adult society's moral values, unfettered by ideology.

Now we arrive at a proponent of what I have referred to as mythic space-time: Mircea Eliade. Primarily a historian of religion, he was also a leading authority on mythology. Some of his works include The Myth of the Eternal Return (1954), Birth and Rebirth (1958), and Myth and Reality (1963). As Eisenstadt noted, Eliade was a scholar of how initiation rites tied in youth with concepts of societal and cosmic time, thus bringing them into adult mentality. Eliade also focused more precisely on the function of time in myth. In Myth and Reality, he expounded the theme that "Time can be overcome". He wrote of the "prepared space" for ritual, of "sacred time" of a myth as outside normal time. Reenacting a myth in ritual was a stepping outside of historical time, into the magical time of the myth. The ritual-goers are entering the actual time of the myth's story. In other words, mythic space-time.

The concept of a timeless realm is a common feature of religions around the world, whether it's heaven or nirvana. Myth uses that concept for the Hero's adventure, among other things. Eliade's Myth and Reality occasionally addresses the Hero, and other topics relevant to this book. Freudian psychoanalysis is shown to partake of the same mythic space-time in its quest for

origins of problems in a personal, archaic past. There is passing mention of Jung and archetypes, as of limited interest to other folklorists and literary critics. The modern interest in imaginary heroic literature is noted for its deeper functioning: "All unwittingly, and indeed believing that he is merely amusing himself or escaping, the man of the modern societies still benefits from the imaginary initiation supplied by tales." And there is also a page about comic books! Superman, with his double identity, is cited as "a well known mythical theme" of the camouflaged Hero with unlimited powers.

I would like to propose a further incorporation of mythic space-time into the depth psychology of the imaginary Hero. Just as archetypes emerge from the collective unconscious, we can say that mythic space-time does. Just as violence can access or emerge from archetypes, we can tie violence to mythic space-time as a behavioral aspect of it. We could thus make a model of four things which exist in mutual, two-way channels:



In fact, from a Jungian view we could say that mythic space-time is an aspect of the archetype of Initiation. But it does seem more autonomous than initiation, as it occurs with any myth. As an archetype in itself, we could see the origin of it in the "unitary

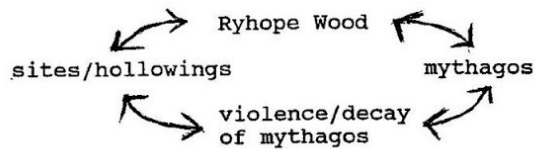
field" participation mystique which Erich Neumann describes in The Child. This is the infant's frame of mind in which its ego is enmeshed in its mother's, living in a blissful union outside of self-awareness. Thus, mythic initiation rituals involve being "born again" out of mythic space-time into the adult world, just as a child's ego is born out of its ties to the mother.

We could go a step further, and descend from the Jungian level to a Freudian level of interpretation. Then we could recognize mythic space-time as a symbol of the sheltering womb, and note the regressive appeal of mythic space-time. Neumann's participation mystique, then, is seen as a mental state of a Freudian pleasure. The blissful mental union derives from an actual physical union. Here we have an example of different interpretations which mutually support each other in the pyramid of depth psychology.

Of course, the typical meaning of "participation mystique" is in an anthropological sense, referring to the mystical union of the primitive/prehistoric hunter's mind with that of his prey. But Neumann's explanation of participation mystique really shows the psychological origin of the ability which was turned to hunting use. And, as explained in Chapter Four of this book, mythic space-time can be seen to originate in the needs of prehistoric hunters. Thus, an archetypal pattern which manifests itself in infancy can reappear in later life as the hunting participation mystique or as mythic space-time.

The utility of this four-part model for mythic space-time is illustrated by a recent trilogy of fantasy novels. I refer to

Robert Holdstock's tales of Ryhope Wood, mentioned briefly in Chapter Three: Mythago Wood (1984), Lavondyss (1988), and The Hollowing (1993). The tales are explicitly Jungian, in a magical forest which grows archetypal characters out of the soil and wood. While all of Ryhope Wood could be considered a mythic space-time, it has archetypal sites and buildings, and travel shortcut-wormholes in it called "hollowings". These make a sort of inner mythic space-time. Violence is a common feature of the short lives of the archetypal creatures, called mythagos. The wood that the mythago archetypes emerge from is accordingly a symbol of the collective unconscious. Thus, we have:



Despite specializing in a literary genre that relies on violence, Holdstock expressed his own heroic fallacy critique of it at one point: "It's one of the things I find hard, very hard ... The violence. So much of myth, so much of legend, so much of it is turned around deeds of heroism, and bravery, and revenge, and war ... and it all comes down to one thing: death. Violent death." (The Hollowing, page 143). I hope Holdstock can find a way out of this conundrum.

Holdstock has the distinction of being more explicit about his psychological and mythological sources than the usual writer of

fiction. When we enter Ryhope Wood, we can share in the scientific adventures of Jungian researchers, or we can focus on the personal quests of the main characters. As the best new comics are mythically self-conscious, perhaps such a trend will develop in fantasy writing.

This brings up the subject of literary criticism, which was broached in this book's prologue. As noted, Northrop Frye coined the term "archetypal criticism" in the 1950s. Frye did not always mean archetypes in a Jungian sense, but usually in a more general sense of a recurring symbol. However, he did consider Jungian and Freudian psychology in his masterful book, Anatomy of Criticism (1957). If Frye were added to my table of psychological perspectives on the hero, a different Jungian interpretation would result. At one point in his book, Frye noted that "It is in the romance that we find Jung's libido, anima, and shadow reflected in the hero, heroine, and villain respectively." In the last two pages of his conclusion, aside from praising Freud, Frye distinguishes form from content.

This polarity of form versus content is exemplified by myth and metaphor versus verbal description. To Frye, myth is the form, whereas the meaningful truth is the content of verbal description. This fits nicely with Joseph Campbell's claim that myth is an experience of life instead of a meaning of life. Frye said that metaphors are the units of myth. Campbell said that myth is metaphor for what cannot be directly spoken.

Frye's dichotomy of myth-form versus verbal-content was noted



by Gene Phillips in 'Metamorphoses of Myth and Meaning; An Analysis of Myth in Comics' in the periodical Amazing Heroes. Phillips renamed this dichotomy as a polarity between symbolism and verisimilitude (an old concept of literary criticism). Along with Richard Reynolds' book, Phillips' article is the best explication I have seen of myth in superhero comics.

Pursuing the symbolic aspect of comics, Phillips reacted to Ursula LeGuin's concept of submyths in science fiction. Instead of inferior submyths, Phillips proposed "cryptomyths" to refer to hidden elements of myth in a superhero's story. He then went on to create a four-level model for the use of archetypes and myths in superhero comics. This is a structure which includes the principle of degrees of awareness, or mythic self-consciousness, of the writers of comics.

To place my ideas in the context of Frye and Phillips, I point out that the entertainment fallacy is a critical question addressing the problem of verisimilitude. The answer to that critical question is mythic space-time, which is in the symbolic realm. This is not a pat answer, thus. A mythic aspect does not make just any violence justified in reality. All the hard questions of morality and ethics and purpose still have to be answered. Depth psychology provides some of the answers to those questions, as with Adler's analysis of criminal motivation.

Phillips' concept of cryptomyths could be applied to mythic space-time. How much of a story takes place in mythic space-time, and how much of that was consciously intended by the storyteller?

Further, how much of violence - in a story or reality - takes place in a mythic state of mind, and how aware of this is the violent actor? This could be a useful question for analysis of the real world.

CONCLUSION: READ THIS FIRST

It is appropriate that, as a professional writer of abstracts, I should finally put an extended one in my book. By all means, this could be read first - or last, as a summary of the ideas I have presented. I am more concerned here with the ideas I have developed of my own, and further thoughts of their implications. This brings the journey through pop culture to some kind of meaningful end. Whether any boon has been found on the journey is relative to the reader.

The book has been about the appearance of Jungian archetypes in various forms of fictional heroic entertainments, and the subcultural and mythological results of those forces. I have thus given a layman's introduction to the ideas of Carl Jung, Joseph Campbell, and others which may touch on the psychology of youth. I have also added in my own ideas upon subcultures defined by how entertainment fulfills mythic and psychic needs of their members. There is the concept of consumption of popular culture products fulfilling social initiation functions for youth.

I have also strayed into criticism, and propounded various types of fallacies for analysis of heroic entertainment. There is the basic entertainment fallacy, its corollary the heroic fallacy,

another corollary as the dramatic video fallacy, and the five minute rule for sexuality and violence in dramatic videos. The concept of mythic space-time arises as an answer to the heroic fallacy, and it implies that there is a proper time and place for violent behavior by people. Mythic space-time is also considered as an archetype in its own right.

The theme of violence has permeated this book, as it must since heroes are concerned. I have suggested a more direct relation between archetypes and violence than is usual. Archetypes are accessed by, and expressed as, violence. For rational society to deny their force is to deny human nature, and this may explain part of the inappropriate expression of violence which so plagues the world today.

This leads to further thoughts on the power of human irrationality, as a final summation of the book's meaning. So what if Jungian and other depth psychology, in some pragmatic sense, actually explains how the human mind works? In an age of science, how can this matter?

Much of the introduction to the book placed science in the context of a foundation for modern reality, which any culture may use to make any lifestyle that they wish. This asocial nature of science has been well explained for the layman, as in Jacob Bronowski's PBS TV series 'The Ascent of Man' or in James Burke's PBS TV series 'The Day the Universe Changed.' Both men chronicled the rise of science, with its values of uncertainty as it changes man's view of the world and understanding of himself. These values

affect society, as both men would claim, and both men would also use the values of uncertainty to promote social tolerance. Well and fine, but subcultures still exist which may completely ignore their scientific underpinnings. People can live in their own little intolerant worlds, full of certainty and bigotry.

This is the power of human irrationality, which such explorers as Freud and Jung and Joseph Campbell dealt with. Is it possible to reconcile such irrational forces with an asocial knowledge whose only social value is uncertainty? The reconciliation occurs everywhere at all times in our daily world. The concept of an entertainment subculture is a recognition of that adjustment of archetypal forces to scientific reality. We have seen how the ancient forms of the culture hero and hero-worshipping cults are now expressed as modern pop-culture heroes and their entertainment subcultures. We have imaginary heroes in the age of science. The depth psychology analysis of comic book superheroes, resulting in the four-perspective table, could be seen as an illustration of the psychic forces which create culture heroes - and create their need in us.

Indeed, for some people the consumption of entertainment may be the only form of social initiation that they ever experience. To consume heroic entertainment is to project oneself into the hero's role, to vicariously go on an adventure. The consumption itself can fit the social forms of ritual. The separation from the normal world can occur by the entry into a theater, wherein the lights go out. The adventure of initiation then occurs. The

return to society happens quite literally, when the lights go back on and the audience leaves the theater.

The deficiencies of a life dominated by entertainment have been examined by way of the aforesaid fallacies. However, these deficiencies may not be too bad, to prevent a viable society or subculture. Whether the vastly divergent subcultures can peacefully coexist and allow continued scientific progress and economic prosperity is another question. The western world does seem to succeed at some form of creative tension, wherein the forces of unreason have not yet overthrown knowledge. We have come very close at times, as World War Two showed.

The world continues to develop its electronic communications and entertainment media, and this will presumably lead to greater reliance on entertainment subcultures as traditional societies break down. To the extent that the printed word and literacy are fostered in the new electronic environment, there may be some preservation of knowledge and intelligence. To the extent that irrational needs are satisfied by the modern media, social stability may be maintained without the reversion to tyranny or chaos. Social progress requires knowledge of human motivation, to prevent such regressions.

Perhaps my elucidation of archetypes in popular culture has contributed to that knowledge. The journey has been a personal one, following personal interests and enjoyments. The enjoyments remain, if the quest for knowledge continues. Between reading academic journals, I may still pick up a comic book.

Such is part of my irrationality.

NOTES

CHAPTER ONE

1. See the chart on page 245 of The Hero With a Thousand Faces. There are also other models of the Hero's cycle. Two others, one of them Freudian, are covered in George Victor's book, op. cit., pages 26-27. Also see Chapter Five in this book.
2. See the 1990 PBS TV show A Gathering of Men, with Bill Moyers and Robert Bly. Transcript available from Journal Graphics, Inc. In the Jungian tradition, Bly has also published A Little Book on the Shadow in 1988.
3. The ideology quote is from pages 187-188 in his cited book. As for the stages, see his chart on page 94. The child psychiatrist Widzer also related developmental stages to comic book superheroes, as cited in Dooley and Engle, page 140. This will be covered in Chapter Four.
4. This is published in an academic literary journal, ANQ, op. cit. in the bibliography under Shiner.

CHAPTER TWO

1. In 1994, Albert I. Berger has a published book about Campbell and Analog magazine, The Magic That Works: John W. Campbell and the American Response to Technology. Judging by the review and a letter in Analog magazine, Berger can take a negative view of

Campbell as a crank and a racist.

2. Wylie's story is according to Brian Ash in Who's Who in Science Fiction, page 66 on 'Cleve Cartmill'. Del Rey comments on both his own and the Cartmill episode on pages 108-109 in his cited book. The Schwartz interview is in Kraft, op. cit., page 25.
3. For an explication of Zelazny, see 'Roger Zelazny's Bold New Mythologies' by Carl Yoke, in Staicar's cited book.
4. A good explanation of con suites is by Phyllis and Nora Day, 'Freaking the Mundane: A Sociological Look at Science Fiction Conventions, and Vice Versa', op. cit. under Hassler.
5. 'Science Fiction, Morals, and Religion' in Science Fiction, Today and Tomorrow, op. cit. under Bretnor.

CHAPTER THREE

1. Help and advice also came from the TV script writer Moira Kyle, and the children's author and film script analyst Staton Rabin.
2. There are at least three public TV sources for Joseph Campbell and George Lucas: the 1988 series with Bill Moyers, excerpts of it in a 1993 American Masters program, George Lucas: Heroes, Myths and Magic, and Lucas speaks of Campbell's influence in the documentary The Hero's Journey: Joseph Campbell.
3. See 'An Ideal of Three: The Art of Theodore Sturgeon' by Regina Sackmary, page 143 in Riley's cited book. Since writing my book, I have also discovered a popular book which analyzes Star Trek by Jungian archetypes: Meaning in Star Trek, by Karin Blair. She spends chapters on Jungian interpretations of McCoy versus Spock.

Fascinating.

4. See pages 55-56 in Viscott's book. Further insight into the narcotic results of media, and the control over imagination which they pose, can be found in Taylor Stoehr's cited essay.

5. The original source for the cathartic theory of violence is usually claimed as Aristotle's Poetics, but this can be disputed. In his 1969 book, Violence and Your Child, A. Arnold refutes this by noting that Aristotle's emotional catharsis does not include gratuitous violence. Arnold has his own version of the heroic fallacy: "There is nothing heroic or manly in violence. Confronted by violence, individuals may rise to such threats with heroism. But this quality is inherent in purposeful individuals. It's not a quality of violence." (page 162) His book is a scathing attack on comic books, TV, and movies. Arnold's book is at the beginning of a period of psychological study of media violence, beyond the few hundred studies he referred to. The chairman of the FCC recently noted, on public TV in the summer of 1995, that in the past 30 years there have been over 3,000 studies of media violence, all concluding that it does influence people.

6. The substitution of violence for sexuality is generally seen as an effect of the Hays Code for movie censorship in the 1930s (see Arnold's 1969 book). But the actual beginning of the violent payoff for sexuality is generally considered to be Alfred Hitchcock's 1960 movie 'Psycho'. In its famous shower scene, a nude woman is knifed to death. However, Hitchcock was a tasteful man who didn't actually show a lot of detail. He had a principle



that the less violence shown, the better for an audience's imagination. Supposedly, he made the movie as a joke to see if he could get away with the whole thing, little dreaming that the seal of approval from an artist like himself would start a trend of explicit gore.

7. See her editorial in The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction, May 1993 issue, pages 5-6.

CHAPTER FOUR

1. Articles on Wertham, violence and watchdog groups can be found in a special issue of The Comics Journal, op. cit. under Groth. A detailed account of Wertham's life and work occurs in a series of articles in Amazing Heroes, op. cit. under Decker.

2. Widzer is mentioned in Jane W. Kessler's essay 'Superman and the Dreams of Childhood' in Dooley, op. cit., page 140.

3. See Vaz, op. cit., page 25. Creator Bob Kane also published an autobiography in 1989, Batman and Me, which goes into specific details. Further details from other contributors and Kane can be found in Kraft, op. cit., in a special issue on the origin of The Batman.

CHAPTER FIVE

1. See page 26 in Victor's book Invisible Men: Faces of Alienation. Otherwise, the closest Rank comes to a summary listing of his formula is on pages 61 and 68 of his own book.

2. Raglan's list is in chapter 16 of his book. It is duplicated in



Victor's book, *ibid.*, as a footnote.

3. See Erik H. Erikson's edited book, The Challenge of Youth.

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